

# Social Connection is Key for Your Health

A lack of social support can negatively impact your physical and mental health. About 50% of Americans have reported experiencing loneliness.

People who experience social isolation or loneliness are at increased risk for health concerns like heart disease and stroke, Type II diabetes, depression and anxiety, thoughts of self-harm, dementia and even earlier death. In fact, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, lacking social connection can increase the risk for premature death as much as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.

## Tips to Improve Social Connection

- Take time to reach out to friends or family members.
- Limit distractions to increase the quality of the time spent with others.
- Consider joining a fitness, hobby, religion or other social group.
- Talk to your doctor for support or guidance.
- Limit time on social media.
- Reach out for help when you're having a hard time: Call a friend, family member, counselor or 988 crisis support.
- Spend time with others outside or volunteer with a local organization.
- Parents can model healthy connections, encourage and facilitate healthy relationships for your children and teach them about negative influences like peer pressure and cyberbullying.



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## Social Connection Benefits

- Having valuable connections can reduce stress, improve sleep and lead to a longer and healthier life.
- Even small changes can reduce your risk of chronic disease.
- Improving social connections can lead to increased resilience and trust, creating healthier communities overall.

*This material is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or clinical judgement of your physician or health care provider. You should consult with and rely only on the advice of your physician or healthcare provider when deciding to follow any particular recommendation.*

## Sources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/risk-factors/index.html>
- <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/improving/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/data-research/promising-approaches/index.html>