

- Interpersonal relations

A LOVING PARTNER CAN BE GOOD FOR YOUR HEART

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Everyone knows that being in love and being loved in return is one of the best feelings in the world. The kilig factor that comes from being in a happy relationship makes your days happier, and even a mundane errand turns into a cherished memory with the right person.



Rosario Soledad C. Neri-Velhagen, MD from the Section of Cardiology at top hospital in the Philippines Makati Medical Center (MakatiMed) reveals that science backs loving relationships, as they can contribute to one's heart health.

“Research suggests that strong relationships, particularly in marriage, contribute to overall health. A 2017 study found unmarried individuals with heart disease had a 52 percent higher likelihood of a heart attack or cardiovascular-related death over nearly four years compared to married counterparts with heart conditions. Overall, data indicates a lower mortality rate for married individuals compared to those never married, divorced or widowed,” explains Dr. Neri-Velhagen.

According to Dr. Neri-Velhagen, how it works is that the feeling of being in love releases hormones such as oxytocin, which is released in response to hugging, kissing and other forms of physical touch. Such hormones decrease stress levels and promote calm and relaxation.

“When you're relaxed, this helps the blood vessels dilate more and ultimately lower your blood pressure,” says Dr.

Neri-Velhagen. “A decrease in blood pressure means less force is exerted on the walls of the arteries with each heartbeat, improving overall heart health.”

Even just thinking of your partner helps. “Studies using imaging techniques reveal that looking at pictures of a romantic partner triggers the parts of the brain associated with mood and pain regulation,” says Dr. Neri-Velhagen. “The thought of one's partner may enhance energy levels by improving blood glucose levels. Healthy blood glucose levels prevent damage to your blood vessels and the nerves that control your heart and blood vessels, decreasing the risk of heart disease over time.”

Of course, the right partner might also encourage you to adopt healthier lifestyle habits. “Doctors can give all the advice they want, but the truth is you're more likely to listen to your spouse if they urge you to eat healthier and exercise more,” admits Dr. Neri-Velhagen.

The next time you see your special person, don't just thank them for their love; thank them too for giving you a healthier heart. And if you don't have anyone just yet, be patient and wait for the right one—the one that won't give you heartaches and heartbreaks. Your heart will thank you for it.