

Your Health Matters

KEEP ON HUGGING!

Just because Valentine's Day is over doesn't mean you should quit hugging and kissing the people you care about. Studies have shown that having a strong connection to other people impacts our health and can even help us live longer.

Physical contact such as holding hands or kissing can trigger the release of chemicals and hormones that affect our bodies. Studies have also shown we may also be able to reduce stress and our risk for heart-disease by having a variety of healthy social relationships.

The National Institutes of Health explains the health benefits of a strong marriage.

Married couples tend to live longer and have better heart health than unmarried couples. Studies have found that when one spouse improves his or her health behaviors—such as by exercising, drinking or smoking less, or getting a flu shot—the other spouse is likely to do so, too.

A study done by Michigan State University also showed that older adults with strong, healthy marriages had a lower risk of developing heart disease.

Relationships with friends, neighbors, co-workers and religious groups or clubs also appear to help people live longer, healthier lives. Social support is believed to help protect the body from stress, viruses, and unhealthy behaviors such as smoking and drinking alcohol.

So hug a friend, call your neighbor, and cuddle up to your spouse. After all, it's great for your relationships and it's good for your health!

The Montgomery County Health Department loves taking care of your family, and works every day to protect, promote and improve health in our community. To learn more, call 573-564-2495 or visit us online at www.montgomerycountyhealth.org or on Facebook or Twitter @healthymoco. ■



2.21.17