

## Marriage makes you less stressed

17th February, 2017



A new study says marital bliss has beneficial health effects. The research is from Carnegie Mellon University in the USA. It concludes that being married reduces your levels of a

stress hormone called cortisol. Researchers tested for cortisol in the saliva of 572 adults aged 21-55 on three different, non-consecutive days. Multiple saliva samples were taken throughout each 24-hour period. The researchers found that the married people in the sample had less cortisol than people who were single, separated, divorced or widowed. The researchers said: "Married people tend to be healthier than both the previously and never married, but the mechanisms through which this occurs remain unclear."

The stress hormone cortisol has many different functions in our body. It regulates blood sugar levels, immune responses and inflammation and can increase the risk of heart disease. It also increases the chances of surviving cancer. High levels of cortisol have been linked to mental conditions such as anxiety and depression. Laboratory director Sheldon Cohen said: "These data provide important insights into the way in which our intimate social relationships can get under the skin to influence our health." Researcher Brian Chin added: "It is exciting to discover a physiological pathway that may explain how relationships influence health and disease."

Sources: [thehealthsite.com](http://thehealthsite.com) / [medicaily.com](http://medicaily.com) / [dailymail.com](http://dailymail.com)

## Writing

Marriage is the best thing to make you happy and relieve stress. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / marital bliss / health effects / being married / divorced / healthier / unclear / stress / hormone / blood sugar / heart disease / cancer / social relationships / disease

## True / False

- a) A piece of research says marital bliss is good for the health. T / F
- b) Being married increases the level of a hormone called cortisol. T / F
- c) Researchers tested people with a different marital status for 3 weeks. T / F
- d) Researchers now understand the mechanism behind marriage and cortisol. T / F
- e) The hormone cortisol also regulates the level of sugar in our blood. T / F
- f) High levels of cortisol can lead to mental illnesses like anxiety. T / F
- g) A lab director said we shouldn't let cortisol get under our skin. T / F
- h) A researcher was excited to see a link between relationships and health. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. <b>suggests</b>     | a. ambiguous    |
| 2. <b>reduces</b>      | b. probability  |
| 3. <b>consecutive</b>  | c. controls     |
| 4. <b>tend</b>         | d. lowers       |
| 5. <b>unclear</b>      | e. close        |
| 6. <b>regulates</b>    | f. indicates    |
| 7. <b>inflammation</b> | g. effect       |
| 8. <b>chances</b>      | h. are inclined |
| 9. <b>intimate</b>     | i. successive   |
| 10. <b>influence</b>   | j. swelling     |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What non-health benefits are there to marriage?
- c) Why don't some couples stay happily married?
- d) How does marriage affect anxiety and depression?
- e) How do your social relationships affect your health?
- f) What three adjectives best describe marriage, and why?
- g) What other influences do relationships have on our health?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Phrase Match

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. marital                         | a. or widowed              |
| 2. reduces your levels of a stress | b. sugar levels            |
| 3. non-                            | c. which this occurs       |
| 4. single, separated, divorced     | d. the skin                |
| 5. the mechanisms through          | e. hormone called cortisol |
| 6. It regulates blood              | f. influence health        |
| 7. mental conditions               | g. bliss                   |
| 8. our intimate                    | h. such as anxiety         |
| 9. get under                       | i. consecutive days        |
| 10. how relationships              | j. social relationships    |

## Discussion – Student B

- What other health benefits are there to marriage?
- What stresses are there in marriage?
- Why do people get married?
- What are the advantages of being single?
- Who are the happiest married people you know?
- What advice do you have for unhappily married people?
- Is marriage forever?
- What do people need to do to stay happily married?

## Spelling

- arlmati bliss has beneficial health effects
- levels of a stress mhoeorn called cortisol
- non-unesiceocvt days
- single, separated, divorced or diweowd
- both the oyvsepulir and never married
- the csnaihemms through which this occurs
- It atreulseq blood sugar levels
- meimun responses
- mental conditions such as atinxye and depression
- provide important tisshing
- mtneaiti social relationships
- how relationships nncueefi health

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. d	3. i	4. h	5. a
6. c	7. j	8. b	9. e	10. g

## Role Play

### Role A – Being Married

You think being married is the best way to relieve stress. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is not as good with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): chocolate, sleep or getting money.

### Role B – Chocolate

You think chocolate is the best way to relieve stress. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is not as good with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): being married, sleep or getting money.

### Role C – Sleep

You think sleep is the best way to relieve stress. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is not as good with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): chocolate, being married or getting money.

### Role D – Getting Money

You think getting money is the best way to relieve stress. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is not as good with their ways. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): chocolate, sleep or being married.

## Speaking – Stress

Rank these with your partner. Put the things that best reduce stress at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| • sunny days | • sleep                 |
| • chocolate  | • getting money         |
| • music      | • chatting with friends |
| • exercise   | • being married         |

### Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.