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KINDNESS  
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CIRCLE

# *Health Benefits of Kindness*

Numerous scientific studies show that acts of kindness result in significant health benefits, both physical and mental. Here are some key points:

- Helping contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders serious and minor, psychological and physical.
- A rush of euphoria, followed by a longer period of calm, after performing a kind act is often referred to as a “helper’s high,” involving physical sensations and the release of the body’s natural painkillers, the endorphins. This initial rush is then followed by a longer-lasting period of improved emotional well-being.
- Stress-related health problems improve after performing kind acts. Helping reverses feelings of depression, supplies social contact, and decreases feelings of hostility and isolation that can cause stress, overeating, ulcers, etc. A drop in stress may, for some people, decrease the constriction within the lungs that leads to asthma attacks.
- Helping can enhance our feelings of joyfulness, emotional resilience, and vigor, and can reduce the unhealthy sense of isolation.
- A decrease in both the intensity and the awareness of physical pain can occur.
- The incidence of attitudes, such as chronic hostility, that negatively arouse and damage the body is reduced.
- The health benefits and sense of well-being return for hours or even days whenever the helping act is remembered.
- An increased sense of self-worth, greater happiness, and optimism, as well as a decrease in feelings of helplessness and depression, is achieved.
- Once we establish an “affiliative connection” with someone - a relationship of friendship, love, or some sort of positive bonding - we feel emotions that can strengthen the immune system.
- Adopting an altruistic lifestyle is a critical component of mental health.
- The practice of caring for strangers translates to immense immune and healing benefits.
- Regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or faith group attendance is the happiness equivalent of getting a college degree or more than doubling your income.

Source: Luks, Allan. *The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*. New York: iUniverse.com, 2001.