

# Gender differences in life expectancy. How it has changed.

It has been known that women typically live longer than men, but why, and has that changed over the years? In early history the differences in longevity between men and women were not as large they are today. Biologically women have a longer life span because of several factors: genetically, “when a mutation of one of the genes of the X chromosome occurs, females have a second X to compensate, whereas all genes of the unique X chromosome of males express themselves, even if they are deleterious.” <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-is-life-expectancy-lo/>. Another factor is estrogen which has been known to have a protective benefit when it comes to heart disease and bad cholesterol. Woman’s bodies are also better suited to storing fat in a “healthier” way than men. Woman store fat in their hips and buttocks which will supply nutrients during pregnancy. Men tend to store fat in their abdomens which put more stress on the heart and can lead to increases in bad cholesterol. Lastly, testosterone has been linked to violence and risk taking.

But despite the biological differences there are social factors that affect mortality. There is a growing excess in male mortality in industrial countries because of a rise in “man made diseases” which are more typically male. “These include exposure to the hazards of the workplace in an industrial context, alcoholism, smoking and road accidents, which have indeed increased considerably throughout the 20th century.” <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-is-life-expectancy-lo/>. Men take more risks and take care of their health less than women. Woman are more likely to go to the doctor, do yearly medical screenings, drink and smoke less. Woman also spend a great deal of their time trying to combat the affects of aging by getting more sleep, eating better, and taking care of their skin. These environmental and social factors have increased the discrepancy between sexes when it comes to longevity. So ladies.... It is so important for us to be good role models to the men in our lives, our husbands, sons, brothers.....if we can live longer by taking care of our health than so can they. It is so important to teach young men the importance of good health and life. Women do not have to outlive their partners or friends. We can live longer together if we all take the time to live healthier. Like I have always said to my friends. Health is the most important factor.... I’d rather go into my grave running than to slip in slowly after years of poor health and possibly bed ridden...if I can help it.