

Do You Know that Positive Mood Impacts Your Health.

In an issue of *Harvard Public Health*, authors suggest that there's an inextricable link between your health and your mood; improve one and you improve the other.

DO YOU/CAN YOU
DO THIS?
SHORT WELLNESS
SELF-CHECKS

Researchers at Harvard are trying to understand the link between positive emotions and good health. This is a new area of research, which is quite exciting. If we can change our mood we can change our health.

There is a vast amount of scientific literature detailing how negative emotions harm the body. Serious, sustained stress or fear can alter biological systems in a way that, over time, adds up to “wear and tear” and, eventually, illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. But negative emotions are only one-half of the equation, says Harvard Health researchers. It looks like there is a benefit of positive mental health that goes beyond the fact that you’re not depressed. emotional vitality—a sense of enthusiasm, of hopefulness, of engagement in life, and the ability to face life’s stresses with emotional balance—appears to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. The protective effect was distinct and measurable, even when taking into account such wholesome behaviors as not smoking and regular exercise.

Harvard Health’s Keys to a happier, healthier life

Research suggests that certain personal attributes—whether inborn or shaped by positive life circumstances—help some people avoid or healthfully manage diseases such as heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, and depression. These include:

- **Emotional vitality: a sense of enthusiasm, hopefulness, engagement**
- **Optimism: the perspective that good things will happen, and that one’s actions account for the good things that occur in life**
- **Supportive networks of family and friends**
- **Being good at “self-regulation,” i.e. bouncing back from stressful challenges and knowing that things will eventually look up again; choosing healthy behaviors such as physical activity and eating well; and avoiding risky behaviors such as unsafe sex, drinking alcohol to excess, and regular overeating**