

Spouse's sunny outlook may be good for your health

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Physical well-being seems to get a boost from having an optimistic partner, study finds.

(HealthDay)—Marriage vows often include the promise to stick together for better or for worse, and research now suggests that when it comes to your health, having an optimistic spouse is better.

Researchers analyzed data gathered from 1,970 heterosexual American couples over the age of 50 who were followed for four years and provided details about their health.

The results showed that people with an optimistic spouse had better physical mobility and fewer chronic illnesses. This [beneficial effect](#) was in addition to a person's own level of optimism, the investigators found.

The study was released online recently in advance of print publication in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*.

"A growing body of research shows that the people in our social networks can have a profound influence on our health and well-being. This is the first study to show that someone else's optimism could be impacting your own health," lead author Eric Kim, a doctoral student in the University of Michigan's department of psychology, said in a

university news release.

Optimism in couples is associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction and better team problem solving, he noted. But this association does not prove a cause-and-effect relationship.

"Practically speaking, I can imagine an optimistic spouse encouraging his or her partner to go to the gym, or eat a healthier meal because the spouse genuinely believes the behavior will make a difference in health," Kim explained.

"Identifying factors that protect against declining health is important for the increasing number of older adults who face the dual threat of declining [health](#) and rising [health care costs](#)," he added.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [marriage and health](#).

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