

Creating connection through touch

September 2016 Newsletter



Did you know that, as humans, we crave touch from the moment we're born?¹ Holding a baby helps him or her feel safe and comforted.

When they're cradled and cuddled, infants sense they're valued. Touch is one of the most basic building blocks of self-esteem.

More benefits of touch

Adults, too, benefit from touch. Even a light pat on the arm or shoulder can show support, sympathy and caring.

Adults who are suddenly alone after a loss can miss the contact with their partners or spouses. They may feel "skin hunger" from the lack of casual and intimate touch they once shared with their "touch partner."²

Pets also provide touch benefits. In addition to companionship and fun, pets offer sensory pleasure. Just holding, stroking or petting a companion animal can help lower stress and blood pressure.³ And it feels good!

The value of a hug

Research shows that hugging sparks the release of oxytocin in our bodies. This chemical boosts trust and lowers fear.⁴

Hugs may also help keep your heart healthy. A study looked at the heart rate and blood pressure of two groups — huggers and non-huggers. The huggers had lower blood pressure and resting heart rates than non-huggers.⁴

Massage: The healing touch

Massage — a form of touch in which an expert applies varying pressure to different parts of your body — can be a complement to Western medicine. Massage can help reduce and manage stress.³

It can also help with:

- Anxiety
- Stomach problems
- Headaches
- Insomnia
- Muscle aches
- Fibromyalgia³

There are different types of massage for different needs. For example, there are sports, deep tissue and trigger point massages.

Each offers a way to help you relax, re-energize and heal. And, like other forms of touch, massage can make you feel calm and happy.

Remember, hugs and massages are just two types of touch. Touch can be a handshake, "high five," pat on the back or other contact. In all its forms, a caring touch can help create a sense of well-being and connection.

¹www.dailystrength.org

²www.psychologytoday.com

³www.helpguide.org

⁴www.mayoclinic.com