

Why Hugging Is Good for Your Health *(from page 8)*

contract and by allowing milk to be produced in a woman's breasts.

Oxytocin is an amazing hormone that is also known as the "love hormone." This is because, interestingly enough, it also is present when you are aroused by your partner or you have a sense of touch (ahem, cue hugs!) Unfortunately, there's not a way to increase Oxytocin through pill form, as it does not easily cross through the blood-brain barrier.

Therefore, it's important to get Oxytocin naturally, which can also help alleviate depression and postpartum depression. Some of the natural ways to get Oxytocin include through touch (meaning through hugs) and also through exercise.

6. Increase Pain Threshold and Promote Healing Another amazing effect of hugs, touch, and the release of Oxytocin is its ability to promote natural growth and healing. German studies have shown that Oxytocin plays a role in helping other transmitters in the brain, leading to physical benefits such as wound healing.

Oxytocin also has the ability to increase your threshold to pain, meaning you can tolerate higher pain levels more so than if you didn't have hugs. In addition, Oxytocin also has an anxiolytic effect, meaning it can reduce anxiety. Reducing stress and anxiety is crucial for healing, as a body under stress is unable to heal properly.

The benefits of hugging are both physical and emotional, promoting a healthy body and mind. The study also showed that the best way to produce Oxytocin is through psychological effects. Therefore, a hug that brings you peace of mind and comfort is also boosting Oxytocin all at once. Touch is an essential part in promoting health, healing, and helping you withstand pain! Remember this when you're running your next marathon and need that extra boost of comfort.

7. Increase Resilience and Help Reduce Insomnia Resilience is also known as our ability to handle pain and stress. With a

boost of Oxytocin and other feel-good hormones released by hugs, such as Serotonin, you can also increase your ability to be resilient to different life stressors.

Not only is resilience essential in everyday life, but studies have also shown that lack of resilience has also been shown to be one of the leading causes of insomnia. This is due to the fact that low resilience means you will carry more stress with you throughout the day, leading to increased arousal and trouble sleeping.

Resilience can be increased by boosting feel-good hormones like Oxytocin, through the use of hugs!

Resilience all has to do with the way you view the world and the way you interact with others. Hugs are, simply put, one of the best ways to feel connected to people and one of the best ways to improve your outlook on life. By feeling like you have a strong support system, and helping others feel as if you're on their side, these can all aid in boosting resilience.

8. Improve Your Health and Your Baby's Health The benefits of hugging also extend to infants and new parents. Amazingly, studies have shown that hugging your baby with skin-to-skin contact, known as "kangaroo care," actually has a number of benefits for both mother, father, and child.

The benefits were studied first in the 1970s in Bogota, Columbia. In this part of South America, premature babies were dying, with only 30% of those babies living past full-term.

Skin-to-skin contact can help:

- Improve your baby's oxygen saturation levels, meaning they get enough oxygen circulating through their body
- Stabilize your baby's heart rate
- Stabilize your baby's breathing rate
- Promote healthy weight and growth in infants
- Stabilize their temperature, since placing an infant on a mother's breasts actually helps regulate their temperature (if a baby is

cold, the breasts get warm, and vice versa)

- Help reduce anxiety over your role as a new parent
- Help improve your confidence levels in caring for your baby

When hugging and cuddling with your baby, you'll find that the benefits work for new fathers, mothers, and infants alike.

9. Control your Autonomic Nervous System and Reduce Anxiety For people with generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder, the symptoms of anxiety can be difficult to overcome. This is because the autonomic nervous system is responsible for the incred-

ibly uncomfortable feelings of:

- Racing heart rate
- Increased adrenaline
- Feelings of impending doom
- Feelings of fear
- Increased breathing rate
- Sweating

These are classic symptoms of anxiety that can make it impossible to get through the day. Unfortunately, these symptoms are controlled by the autonomic nervous system, which is the part of the nervous system that controls your involuntary actions.

In addition, the amygdala, which is the fear response center of the brain, is responsible for sending fear signals to your body which leads to anxiety.

School Sports Physicals Available at Four Valley Health System Departments

Four freestanding emergency departments are offering \$50 school sports physicals beginning Monday, June 17 and ending Tuesday, September 3, 2024, seven days a week, 24 hours a day for student athletes ages 18 and under. Students under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Insurance will not be billed. Student athletes should bring their designated forms for the emergency medicine physicians to complete. **For greatest convenience and planning, parents may request a time online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using the link below.**

Locations for sports physicals include:

ER at Blue Diamond, an extension of Spring Valley Hospital – 9217 S. Cimarron Road/cross street Blue Diamond in Southwest Las Vegas

ER at Blue Diamond | Spring Valley Hospital

ER at North Las Vegas, an extension of Valley Hospital – 6625 North 5th Street/cross street Rome in North Las Vegas.

ER at Valley Vista, an extension of Centennial Hills Hospital – 7230 N. Decatur Blvd /cross

street Elkhorn in North Las Vegas, across from the DMV

ER at Valley Vista | Centennial Hills Hospital

ER at West Craig, an extension of Centennial Hills Hospital – 7050 West Craig Road / cross street Tenaya. Use the entrance with the McDonalds and Big's Furniture sign.

ER at West Craig | Centennial Hills Hospital

Families are welcome to request a time or walk in anytime, whether it's 5 a.m. or midnight, the July 4 holiday or a weekend.

Please note this medical visit is for student physicals only. If a student comes in with additional medical illnesses or conditions, the student physical will convert to an ER visit. Physicians are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of the hospitals or freestanding ERs of The Valley Health System. The hospital, freestanding ED or The Valley Health System shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice,

visit:
www.valleyhealthsystemlv.com