

Marital Bliss Improves Health

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. remain /rə'mān/ continue to exist, especially after other similar or related people or things have ceased to exist.
Example: She remains faithful to him even after he cheated on her.
2. regulate /'regyə,lāt/ control or supervise (something, especially a company or business activity) by means of rules and regulations.
Example: The health sector regulated the use of supplements.
3. inflammation /,inflə'māSH(ə)n/ a localized physical condition in which part of the body becomes reddened, swollen, hot, and often painful, especially as a reaction to injury or infection.
Example: There was inflammation of her intestine because of the bacteria.
4. insight /'in,sīt/ the power or act of seeing into a situation
Example: She gave her insight on the ongoing issue.
5. intimate /'in(t)əmət/ closely acquainted; familiar, close.
Example: Be careful in revealing your most intimate secrets to someone.



A new study says marital bliss has beneficial health effects. Researchers from Carnegie Mellon University said being married reduces levels of a stress hormone called cortisol. Researchers tested for cortisol in the saliva of 572 adults on three different days. Multiple samples were taken throughout each day.

The researchers found that the married people had less cortisol than people who were single, separated, divorced or widowed. The researchers said: "Married people tend to be healthier...but the mechanisms through which this occurs **remain** unclear."

The hormone cortisol has different functions in our body. It **regulates** blood sugar levels, immune responses and **inflammation**. It can increase the risk of heart disease and the chances of surviving cancer. High levels of cortisol are linked to mental conditions like anxiety and depression.

Dr Sheldon Cohen said the data provide, "important **insights** into the way in which our **intimate** social relationships can...influence our health". Researcher Brian Chin added: "It is exciting to discover a physiological pathway that may explain how relationships influence health and disease."

DISCUSSION

1. What other health benefits are there to marriage?
2. Why do people get married?
3. What non-health benefits are there to marriage?
4. How do your social relationships affect your health?
5. What three adjectives best describe marriage, and why?