

# Hugs help protect against the common cold, research finds

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## ***PBS:***

Flu season is upon us, and doctors are predicting that this year's epidemic could be especially severe. What steps are you taking to protect yourself from disease this winter? Stocking up on hand sanitizer? Chugging orange juice? Avoiding handshakes and crowded subway cars? How about hugging your friends?

Wait, what? A team of researchers at Carnegie Mellon University found that frequent hugging helps reduce individuals' susceptibility to infections associated with stress, and reduces the severity of symptoms if an infection is contracted by providing increased social support.

Their findings, published in the journal "Psychological Science," were based on a study of 404 healthy adults. After completing a survey designed to establish their perceived level of social support, participants were asked how often they experienced interpersonal conflicts, and how often they often they received hugs during a series of phone interviews. The researchers then exposed participants to a common cold virus and monitored them for symptoms.

Read the whole story: [PBS](#)