

# More and more research shows friends are good for your health

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## *The Washington Post:*

Overwhelmed recently by the stress of an impending move — along with the usual demands of a busy life — I turned to the people I love.

In small chunks of time between tasks on my to-do list, I called and texted with my sister, my parents, local friends and old friends scattered around the country. Some conversations turned my stress into laughter. Others made me cry. One friend came over to clean out my closet. Then she took our kids for four hours so we could pack without interruption.

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In a 2010 meta-analysis that combined data on more than 308,000 people across 148 studies, for example, researchers found a strong connection between social relationships and life span. The size of the effect rivaled that of better-known health-related behaviors such as smoking and exercise.

Because the studies used different methods, the analysis couldn't say exactly how many more years of life we might gain by having true pals, says lead author Julianne Holt-Lunstad, a psychologist at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Read the whole story: [The Washington Post](#)