[IMAGE]

# Live Healthy, Live Longer – Even If You're Suffering

By Editorial Staff

Life is short enough without having it cut short by illness or disease, but that's the unfortunate case for too many people. In fact, many people have multiple (two or more) health issues, which not only makes life a daily challenge, but also reduces lifespan, sometimes dramatically. But there's a silver lining: Research suggests healthy living – even when you're suffering from health problems – can extend your life.

Researchers came to this conclusion after tracking 90,000-plus middle-aged adults stricken with two or more of 36 chronic conditions. The researchers assigned each study participant an aggregate health score based on four specific lifestyle factors – leisure-time physical activity, smoking, diet and alcohol consumption – and then assessed how they impacted the risk of dying during the next decade. Participants were allocated to one of four groups based on these lifestyle factors: "very unhealthy," "unhealthy," "healthy," or "very healthy."

Results, published in *PLoS Medicine*, showed that those who pursued healthier lifestyles (and thus were categorized in the "very healthy" or "healthy" group) were less likely to die during the study period compared to those in the "unhealthy" or "very unhealthy" group. Specifically, a "healthy" aggregate score was associated with a additional 4.5 years, while a "very healthy" score added 6.3 years. As might be expected, smoking was the most significant lifestyle factor impacting lifespan.

What's the takeaway? When life hands you health challenges, fight back with the power of healthy living! Talk to your doctor for more information on what you can do to not only prevent disease, but keep on living even if you're suffering.

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