

healthy wealthy&wise

EXPLORING THE
HEALTH BENEFITS
OF FRIENDSHIPS

THE PROS &
CONS OF
ORDERING
E-GROCERIES

TAKING THE
STING OUT OF
SUMMER

SUMMER 2024



Empowered Members,
Informed Choices



THE FRIENDSHIP RX: HOW YOUR SOCIAL CIRCLE CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

Friendship goes beyond just knowing someone; it is a powerful force that boosts both mental and physical health. In today's busy world, cultivating and nurturing meaningful relationships should be viewed as an essential investment in our overall well-being. Whether it's spending time together, sharing meaningful conversations, or acts of kindness, prioritizing our friendships can yield profound dividends for our health and happiness.

Mental health is intricately intertwined with the quality of our social relationships. Friendships, in particular, serve as a necessary source of support during times of stress, adversity, and loneliness. According to the American Psychological Association, strong social connections can help buffer the effects of stress, reduce the risk of depression and anxiety, and enhance resilience in the face of life's challenges. Friendships provide a safe space for open communication, empathy, and validation, which can help foster a sense of belonging and acceptance that is essential for our own psychological well-being.

Beyond its impact on mental health, friendship also exerts a tangible influence on physical well-

being, influencing everything from cardiovascular health to immune function. Numerous studies have shown that individuals with strong social support networks tend to live longer, healthier lives, with lower rates of chronic disease and mortality. According to research published in the Journal of Health and Social Behavior, socially isolated individuals are at a significantly higher risk of developing health problems ranging from obesity and hypertension to heart disease and dementia.

The mechanisms underlying the link between friendship and physical health are multifaceted and complex. One key factor is the role of social support in mitigating the harmful effects of stress on the body. Studies



have shown that having close friends to confide in and rely on can help regulate stress hormones, reduce inflammation, and promote cardiovascular health. Furthermore, friendships often entail engaging in social activities and hobbies. From regular exercise and outdoor recreation to nutritious eating habits and stress management techniques, these shared activities can all contribute to a healthier lifestyle.

Friendship also plays a crucial role in promoting resilience and recovery in the face of illness or injury. Research has shown that patients with strong social support networks tend to have better treatment adherence, faster recovery times, and improved quality of life following medical interventions. Whether it's through practical assistance, emotional encouragement, or simply lending a listening ear, friends

can provide invaluable support during times of illness, helping individuals cope with pain, uncertainty, and fear.

People are inherently social animals. We collaborate at work, gather in crowds at stadiums and movie theaters to enjoy a communal experience, and engage in various activities with others for fun. Simply put, we enjoy being around people, and it often sparks our intellectual and creative sides. Having friends is not merely a social nicety but a cornerstone of our own well-being.



Finding Friendships As We Age

1. **Attend community activities and events tailored to your interests**, such as volunteering for local organizations or joining clubs and hobby groups. This can allow you to build relationships based on shared interests and experiences.
2. **Social gatherings such as places of worship, community centers, or senior centers.** Engaging in conversations and activities with others in the same age group can foster a sense of belonging in one's own community.
3. **Embracing new hobbies**, take up a new sport like pickleball, or attend continuing education courses at the local community college. Stepping outside of your comfort zone can enhance the chances of forming new friendships.

Changes beginning July 1, 2024, your Active & Fit Direct standard membership includes access to one standard gym. You then have the option to purchase an additional standard or premium gym membership with a \$5 discount on each monthly fee.



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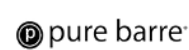
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CHECKOUT ON THE COUCH: CONVENIENCE VS COMPROMISE

With the ability to order pretty much anything online nowadays, groceries seem like a no-brainer, and pretty much every major grocery chain provides online ordering for delivery or curbside pickup. Ordering groceries online has become increasingly popular due to its convenience and flexibility. With just a few clicks, customers can browse a wide selection of products from the comfort of their own homes and have them delivered directly to their doorstep.

Many online grocery platforms offer convenient features such as personalized recommendations, easy reordering of frequently purchased items, and flexible delivery options to accommodate varying schedules. Additionally, online shopping allows customers to easily compare prices, search for specific products, and take advantage of digital coupons and promotions, making it a convenient and cost-effective alternative to traditional grocery shopping. Let's take a look at some of the major pros and cons of ordering groceries online to see how well it suits your lifestyle!



Pros 😊

- **Convenience:** One of the primary advantages of ordering groceries online is the convenience it offers. Customers can shop from the comfort of their own homes at any time of the day, without the need to travel to a store.
- **Timesaving:** Online grocery shopping saves time by eliminating the need to navigate crowded aisles, wait in checkout lines, and travel to and from the store. This is particularly beneficial for busy individuals or those with mobility limitations.
- **Sticking to your budget:** While it's just basic math, once you're wheeling a full cart of groceries around, keeping track of your budget can become a bit unwieldy. Being able to order online allows you to keep track of your budget in real time and allows you to quickly eliminate items if you're trying to stick to a precise total.
- **Avoid impulse purchases:** Shopping online can help you avoid impulse purchases, as you can stick to their shopping list without being tempted by in-store displays or promotions.
- **Convenient delivery options:** Online grocery services often offer flexible delivery options, allowing you to choose a delivery time that suits your schedule. Some platforms even offer same-day or next-day delivery, ensuring that customers receive their groceries promptly.

Cons 😞

- **Delivery fees:** While some online grocery services offer free delivery for orders over a certain amount, others may charge delivery fees that can add to the overall cost of groceries. This can make online shopping less cost-effective, especially for smaller orders.
- **Quality concerns:** When ordering groceries online, customers rely on the accuracy and reliability of the service to select fresh and high-quality products. However, there may be instances where the quality of items received does not meet expectations, such as bruised produce or items nearing expiration dates.
- **Lack of control:** Online grocery shopping gives you less control over the selection process compared to shopping in-store. You have to rely on the descriptions and images provided by the online platform, which may not always accurately represent the products.
- **Delivery issues:** Delays, missed deliveries, or incorrect orders can occur when using online grocery services, leading to inconvenience and frustration for customers. Factors such as inclement weather, traffic conditions, or logistical challenges may impact delivery times and reliability.
- **Environmental impact:** Online grocery delivery involves packaging materials and transportation, which can contribute to environmental pollution and carbon emissions. This may be a concern for environmentally conscious consumers who prefer to minimize their ecological footprint.

Like most newer services, ordering groceries online is not without its own set of growing pains, but for those looking for convenience or simply want an easier way to track their budget, it can be a great option. If you haven't tried it yet, order online next time and see if it works for you! It might just be your new favorite service.

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SUMMER SURVIVAL GUIDE: INSECT EDITION

As the temperatures rise and outdoor activities become more frequent, the risk of insect bites looms large. From pesky mosquitoes to venomous spiders, encounters with biting and stinging insects can lead to discomfort, irritation, and in some cases, serious health complications. Understanding the types of insect bites, along with preventive measures and appropriate treatment strategies, is essential for safeguarding one's health and enjoying the season to the fullest.

Summer brings a surge in insect activity, with mosquitoes, ticks, bees, wasps, and spiders becoming more prevalent in outdoor environments. These insects are not only nuisances but also potential

vectors for disease transmission and allergic reactions. Mosquitoes, for example, are notorious for spreading diseases such as West Nile and Zika viruses, while ticks can transmit Lyme disease and other illnesses. Bee and wasp stings can trigger severe allergic reactions in susceptible individuals, and certain spiders, such as the black widow and brown recluse, possess venomous bites that can cause systemic symptoms and tissue damage if left untreated.

Preventing insect bites is the first line of defense against potential health risks. Here is a quick list of some effective precautions you can take against outdoor pests:



1. Apply insect repellents to exposed skin and clothing before heading outdoors.
2. Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and closed-toe shoes when spending time outdoors, particularly in wooded or tall grass areas.
3. Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water, so eliminate sources of standing water around the home, such as flowerpots, bird baths, and clogged gutters.
4. Install screens on windows and doors to keep insects out of the home. Use mosquito nets over cribs and strollers when outdoors with infants or young children.
5. Insects are attracted to dark, humid environments. Stay in well-lit areas when outdoors at night and use outdoor lighting to deter insects from congregating around your home.
6. When dining outdoors, keep food and beverages covered to prevent attracting insects. Clean up spills promptly and dispose of food waste properly to avoid attracting pests.
7. Avoid disturbing insect nests or hives, such as those belonging to bees, wasps, or hornets. If you encounter a nest, move away calmly, and avoid swatting or making sudden movements that could provoke an attack.

Despite preventive efforts, insect bites may still occur, which could require prompt and appropriate treatment. For minor bites and stings, clean the affected area with soap and water and apply a cold compress to reduce swelling. You may also take over-the-counter antihistamines or pain relievers to help alleviate symptoms. If symptoms persist or worsen, seeking medical attention is advisable, especially for individuals experiencing signs of an allergic reaction. In cases of severe allergic reactions, such as difficulty breathing, swelling of the face or throat, dizziness, or loss of consciousness, you should seek emergency medical care immediately.

While most insect bites are more irritating than anything, it's essential to be aware of the potential risks and take proactive measures to minimize them. Educating oneself about common biting and stinging insects, understanding preventive

strategies, and knowing when to seek medical help are critical components of summer safety. By staying vigilant and prepared, you'll be able to enjoy outdoor activities with greater peace of mind and take full advantage of what the summer has to offer!





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