Marriage Promotes Health

**Issue:** Marriage promotes health and well-being among married couples\(^1\), as well as among their children.

**Illnesses**
- Compared to married individuals, the risk of mortality is 58 percent higher for never-married individuals and 27 percent for divorced/separated individuals.\(^2\)
- Married persons are less likely to become severely ill than the divorced.\(^3\) Divorced people have 20 percent more chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or cancer than married people.\(^4\)
- Married people are least likely to have mental disorders,\(^5\) and have higher levels of emotional and psychological well-being than those who are single, divorced, or cohabiting.\(^6\)

**Men versus Women**
- For both men and women, marriage is associated with a significant reduction in depression.\(^7\)
- Married men have lower levels of stress hormones,\(^8\) are three times less likely to die from cardiovascular disease, and live longer after being diagnosed with cancer.\(^9\)
- Married women have a 60 percent lower risk of cardiovascular disease [than divorced women],\(^10\) experience less psychological distress,\(^11\) and have lower breast-cancer morbidity.\(^12\)
- The diverse health benefits for married couples do not extend to cohabiting couples.\(^13\)

**Lifestyle**
- Married men and women have better access to private health insurance, have lower healthcare costs, and are treated in higher-quality hospitals.\(^14\)
- Married individuals smoke and binge drink less frequently than cohabiters.\(^15\)

**Children’s Health**
- An eight-decade study concluded that “parental divorce during childhood was the single strongest social predictor of early death.” On average, these children died 5 years earlier and were more adversely impacted than those children who experienced a parent’s death.\(^16\)
- Children who experience parental divorce or separation are more likely to have health problems.\(^17\)

**Conclusion:** The intact, married family naturally delivers fundamental health benefits to all of its members. MARRI research available online\(^18\) shows that promoting marriage is an indispensable component of effective healthcare reform in America.
Married two-parent families, “married-couple families,” and similar terms within this document all refer to families in which there is a married mother and father present. Note, according to the US Census Bureau, “Family households and married-couple families do not include same-sex married couples even if the marriage was performed in a state issuing marriage certificates for same-sex couples.”


For example, "164 Reasons to Marry"