



# Staying in Touch®

## ***It's nearly Spring!***

Has there ever been a year when we were more ready for Spring and some positive changes?

After a year living with this pandemic, we're all longing for our old "normal" lives and happier times. One thing is certain: most folks are not taking their health for granted these days.

With much of the population looking forward to their vaccinations, this month seemed to be a good time to share information on how to get the most protection from your COVID shots.

You'll notice as you read the main article that the steps the experts suggest you take are the same things that massage offers you—less stress, better sleep, etc.

There has never been a more important time for us to take every opportunity to improve our health status and strengthen our immune systems. And what better way to do so than through your regular massage sessions?

If you have any questions about massage and how it can benefit your health, just ask at your next appointment.

Keep making massage a healthy priority in your life; see you soon!

## **For Maximum Effectiveness, De-Stress and Get Healthy Before Your COVID Shot**

*by Cara Murez*

Not many people have had the opportunity to get the COVID-19 vaccine yet. But while you wait your turn, there are some steps you can take to give the vaccine—whichever brand you get—a boost when it's available to you.

An Ohio State University review of 49 vaccine studies dating back 30 years examined how stress, depression and healthy behaviors, such as exercise, can affect immune response to a vaccine.

Although it's not realistic to entirely transform your health and habits in a few weeks or months, there are some steps everyone can take—even last-minute ones—to make a difference.

Those include getting good sleep as well as exercise in the days before and after you get your shot, said the review's senior author, Janice Kiecolt-Glaser. She is director of Ohio State's Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research, in Columbus.

"There are several things that are really reasonable and relatively easy," she said.

Pandemic-related stress may have set people back when it comes to maintaining the behaviors that keep them healthier, the study authors noted. Recent data from around the world have revealed higher rates of depression and anxiety, more insomnia, increased alcohol sales and more overeating, according to the review.

The studies in this review looked at the effects of psychological factors and behaviors on immune response to a range of vaccines, including for influenza, hepatitis B, typhoid and pneumonia. This evidence is likely relevant to the COVID-19 vaccine, the researchers said.

"What we see is that stress can delay your antibody response to the vaccine," Kiecolt-Glaser said. "It can also enhance side effects, and it may also mean that your protection may be shorter than people or later than people who were not stressed. So, it has a lot of unpleasant consequences."

Past research has shown a variety of ways that immune response can be hampered. This includes slower immune response, gradually diminishing response and reduced antibodies.

Additional studies in Kiecolt-Glaser's lab found people who were depressed had more post-vaccination side effects. Having some side effects is a normal response to vaccines.

Kiecolt-Glaser and her late husband, immunologist Ronald Glaser, are known as pioneers in mind-body research, including ways stress impairs physical health, according to a news release from Ohio State.



(See ***Before Your COVID Shot ...*** on back page)

## Before Your COVID Shot ...

(continued from front page)

Previous research also showed a range of helpful behaviors, including **massage**, expressive writing for stress management, physical activity and nutritional supplements.

Sleep really matters, Kiecolt-Glaser said. She suggested trying to get a good night's sleep for a couple of nights before your shot and a couple of nights afterward.

"You want to maximize sleep at these times, because sleep is really important for your immune system and being short on sleep makes your immune system less functional,"

Kiecolt-Glaser said.

Though research shows that more physically fit people are likely to have a better vaccine response, there is also evidence that even short-term physical activity in the 24 hours before you get the vaccine can be beneficial, Kiecolt-Glaser said. She recommended a vigorous workout.

Some studies suggest that even 30 or 45 minutes of exercises for the arm you're going to be vaccinated in may be helpful, Kiecolt-Glaser said.

"Whatever your state is when you have the opportunity to get the vaccine, obviously you want to get it, but you want to maximize your response," she

said. "And these are things that could be helpful in maximizing both the initial effectiveness of the vaccine and how quickly you respond, and also in terms of the durability of your vaccine response."

The study also suggested eating a healthy diet, quitting or reducing smoking, and managing stress through exercise and mindfulness meditation. Seek professional help if you're struggling with depression, the authors advised.

The review is accepted for publication in the journal *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.

Source: [consumer.healthday.com](http://consumer.healthday.com)

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## What are your favorite massage benefits?

- Relaxes the body
- Calms the nervous system
- Lowers blood pressure
- Strengthens the immune system
- Reduces anxiety
- Promotes quality sleep
- Reduces mental stress
- Speeds recovery from illness
- Reduces heart rate



**Celebrate the coming of Spring with a massage gift certificate for that special person in your life! Call today to order ...**

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***Life is a mirror and will reflect back to the thinker what he thinks into it.***

**—Ernest Holmes**

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*The content of this newsletter is not intended to replace professional medical advice. If you're ill, please consult a physician.*

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