



## VOLUNTEERING: THE POWER OF ONE .

BY RACHEL SAVIEO

Volunteering positively impacts the community, enriches your own life, keeps you active and connected, and teaches new skills and interests. Whether you choose to give your time, talents, or treasures, you will change lives.

If you are looking for ways to contribute, here are some ideas to get you started:

### Donate Your Time

- Babysit for a single mom
- Make dinner for a struggling friend
- Work the registration table at a community event

### Donate Your Talents

- Design a newsletter for a nonprofit organization
- Teach a Sunday school class at your place of worship
- Help a neighbor fix their leaky faucet or change their oil

### Donate Your Treasure

- Donate money to your local United Way
- Give to the Red Cross for disaster relief efforts
- Donate used clothes, toys, or furniture to Goodwill or a nearby Salvation Army

Source: American Psychological Association. [psycnet.apa.org/journals/hea/31/1/87](http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/hea/31/1/87). Accessed 19 April 2017.

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## Smart Facts

**24.9%**

of United States residents volunteered in 2015.

**63%**

of Americans engage in informal volunteering, like doing favors for neighbors.

**7.9 BILLION**

hours of service were contributed in 2015.

Source: Corporation for National & Community Service. [nationalservice.gov/vcla/national](http://nationalservice.gov/vcla/national). Accessed 18 April 2017.



# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONNECTION .

BY JENNA MEARS

There's a lot of hype right now around the health impact of social connections and happiness, but we often don't connect our social life with our well-being. The fact is, a lack of social connection has a greater overall health risk than smoking! Being lonely impacts our immune systems, anxiety levels, and risk of depression and a total of 148 studies have found people with strong social relationships have a 50% lower risk of mortality.

Social connections are the relationships you have with the people around you. These people may be friends, family members, colleagues, or neighbors. Being social enables you to interact with these people and relate to them in a positive manner. Having strong social connections can have the following positive impacts in your life:

1. **Prevent loneliness.** Loneliness is often mistaken for depression; so instead of connecting with others, we may take medication. Strong social connections make you less lonely.
2. **Improve the environment.** Environmentalist Bill McKibben states that we won't have sustainability without community. When we see people as a main source of security and entertainment, we will stop turning to "things."
3. **Greater happiness.** Not only does happiness increase when we have social connections, but we gain trust in others.
4. **Higher immune function.** This may seem silly, but if we aren't exposed to germs our bodies won't know how to fight them. The more we interact with our fellow humans, the better our immune systems will function.
5. **Earlier treatment of disease.** A study found that adults in neighborhoods with high levels of socialization were 10% to 22% more likely to get screened for diseases at recommended ages.
6. **Better cognitive function.** Cognitive function has been proven to increase when people have frequent social contact.



*Cognitive function has been proven to increase when people have frequent social contact.*

If you consider yourself a social butterfly, you probably aren't shocked by the findings above, and you likely feel less lonely in your overall life. If you prefer to spend more time by yourself, think about strengthening the social connections you value. Remember, social connections are relatively easy to cultivate, especially in today's tech-filled world. Social media makes it easier to make friends and stay connected with them wherever they are.

Take time out of your busy life to reconnect with friends, family, and your community for a healthy pick-me-up!

Sources: EFA Employee and Family Resources. [efr.org/importance-social-connections/](http://efr.org/importance-social-connections/). Accessed 25 April 2017.

Mutual Responsibility. [mutualresponsibility.org/science/15-reasons-positive-social-connections-good-health](http://mutualresponsibility.org/science/15-reasons-positive-social-connections-good-health). Accessed 25 April 2017.



# MANAGING YOUR MEDICAL BILLS.

BY JOHN THOMAS

Even the simplest healthcare matters can get complicated when bills and explanation of benefits (EOB) arrive. However, if you take the following steps after a visit with a provider, you'll keep better track of your billing, and you won't get overcharged.

1. **Mark your calendar.** This helps you go back later and confirm appointment dates.
2. **Create files.** At the very least, have one file for unpaid medical bills and one for paid ones; your system will work better if you have a separate "unpaid" file for each person on your health plan.
3. **Get a printed record of your visit.** Before leaving the provider's office, check the print-out of services you received to make sure it's correct. When you get home, put it in your "unpaid" file.
4. **File the bills.** When you get a bill, compare it to the print-out you got from the provider's office, but don't pay it yet. Put it in the "unpaid" file unless something seems incorrect. In that case, call your provider.
5. **Check your EOB.** When your EOB arrives, compare it to your bill to make sure all of the charges make sense. According to research, as many as 8 out of 10 medical bills contain errors, so check carefully. Then file the EOB in your "unpaid" file.
6. **Pay the adjusted bill.** Next, you should receive a bill that shows an adjusted charge, taking into account your insurer's negotiated price and any deductibles or out-of-pocket limits you might have. Once again, compare the bill to the EOB and other documents. If all looks good, pay the bill, staple all the documents together, and put them in your "paid" file. If there's a problem, contact your provider.



## *June 11 is National Making Life Beautiful Day*

National Making Life Beautiful Day is dedicated to all people who create beauty in their own lives and/or someone else's. Create beauty through building relationships or helping others achieve success, and never underestimate the power of one small action.

Source: National Day Calendar. [nationaldaycalendar.com/national-making-life-beautiful-day-june-11](http://nationaldaycalendar.com/national-making-life-beautiful-day-june-11). Accessed 13 April 2017.

# HARVEST OF THE MONTH: CORN

BY MECHELLE MEADOWS

Corn is a staple for summer picnics and barbecues. You'll see it begin making its way into your local farmers market and produce section this June.

Corn is both a vegetable and a whole grain, meaning it's packed full of fiber that aids in digestion. It has also been linked to better blood sugar control in type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Meals that are high in corn have been shown to promote overall richness of nutrition.

## How to Select

First, inspect the corn for small brown holes in the husk. This indicates wormholes, and these ears of corn should be avoided. Feel the kernels through the husk to make sure they are plump and don't have gaps. The husk should be bright green and snug around the ear of corn, and the tassels should be brown and sticky. If tassels are dry or black, the corn is old.

## How to Store

While storing corn, do not remove the husk. Keep it in an airtight container or in the refrigerator tightly wrapped in plastic. Eat within three days of purchase. Frozen kernels will last for two to three months.



## How to Prepare

Corn can be boiled, grilled, or steamed. To steam quickly, fill the bottom of a steamer with two inches of water and bring to a boil. Steam for five minutes.

Sources: Food52. [food52.com/blog/7700-how-to-choose-an-ear-of-corn-without-peeking](http://food52.com/blog/7700-how-to-choose-an-ear-of-corn-without-peeking). Accessed 1 May 2017.  
World's Healthiest Foods. [whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=90](http://whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=90). Accessed 1 May 2017.



## Recipe: Avocado & Corn Salsa

### Ingredients (makes 5 servings):

1 ripe avocado, diced  
2-3 Tbsp fresh lime juice  
1 ripe red tomato, seeded and diced  
1 ear sweet corn, shucked  
1 scallion, trimmed and finely chopped  
1-2 jalapeño or serrano peppers, seeded and minced  
(for a hotter salsa, leave the seeds in)  
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro  
Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Directions:

1. Place the avocado in the bottom of a nonreactive mixing bowl and gently toss it with 2 tablespoons of the lime juice. Spoon the tomato on top of the avocado.
2. Cut the kernels off the corn. The easiest way to do this is to lay the cob flat on a cutting board and remove the kernels using lengthwise strokes of a chef's knife. Add the corn kernels to the mixing bowl. The salsa can be prepared to this stage up to two hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate.
3. Just before serving, add the jalapeño(s) and cilantro to the mixing bowl and gently toss to mix. Taste for seasoning, adding more lime juice as necessary and season with salt and pepper to taste; the salsa should be highly seasoned.

### Nutrition Information:

PER SERVING: 111 calories, 6g fat, 1g saturated fat, 1g polyunsaturated fat, 4g monounsaturated fat, 14g carbohydrates, 2g protein, 39mg sodium, 4g fiber

Source: Epicurious. [epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/avocado-and-corn-salsa-231541](http://epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/avocado-and-corn-salsa-231541). Accessed 1 May 2017.