

The Value of Friendships as We Age



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Q1. How many close friends do you have?

1. None
2. 1
3. 2–3
4. 4–5
5. 6 or more

Q2. Would you say you have enough close friends?

1. Yes, I have enough close friends
2. No, I do not have enough close friends

Q3. How interested are you in developing new friendships?

1. Very interested
2. Somewhat interested
3. Not interested

If Q1 = 2, 3, 4, or 5

Q4. In the past year, how often have you had contact with your close friend(s)?

1. Almost daily / daily
2. At least once a week
3. About once or twice a month
4. Once every few months
5. About once a year or less
6. Almost never / never



If Q1 = 2, 3, 4, or 5

Q5. In the past month, through which of the following ways have you had contact with your close friend(s)? Select all that apply.

1. In-person
2. Phone call
3. Video chat
4. Text message
5. Email
6. Social media
7. None of the above

If Q1 = 2, 3, 4, or 5

Q6. How would you rate the amount of contact you have with your close friends?

1. Would like more
2. It's about right
3. Would like less

If Q1 = 2, 3, 4, or 5

Q7. Can you count on your close friends to provide support if you needed...

	Yes, definitely	Sometimes	No
emotional support (in good times or bad)			
to discuss your health			
to borrow money in an emergency			

If Q1 = 2, 3, 4, or 5

Q8. In the past year, has a close friend done any of the following?

	Yes	No	N/A
Attended your medical appointments			
Helped you when you were sick or injured			
Picked up medication for you			

If Q1 = 2, 3, 4, or 5

Q9. In the past year, has your close friend/have your close friends encouraged or motivated you to...

	Yes	No
make healthy choices (such as exercising more or eating a healthier diet)		
stop engaging in unhealthy behaviors (such as eating unhealthy foods or drinking too much)		
get a symptom or health issue checked out by a health care provider		

Q10. Compared to when you were younger...

	Harder	About the same	Easier
making friends now is...			
maintaining friendships now is...			

If Q1 = 2, 3, 4, or 5

Q11. Are any of your close friend(s) from a different generation (at least 15 years older or younger than you)?

1. Yes
2. No

If Q11 = 1

Q12. Are those close friend(s) from different generations: older than you, younger than you, or both?

1. Older
2. Younger
3. Both

Data Source and Methods

This National Poll on Healthy Aging report presents findings from a national household survey conducted exclusively by NORC at the University of Chicago for the University of Michigan's Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation. This survey module was administered online and by phone from August 5th–27th, 2024, to a randomly selected, stratified group of U.S. adults age 50–94 (n=3,486), with an oversample of non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic and Asian American and Pacific Islander populations. The survey completion rate was 36% among panel members invited to participate. The margin of error is +/- 1 to 4 percentage points for questions asked of the full sample and higher among subgroups.

The sample for the Michigan Poll on Healthy Aging included Michigan respondents ages 50–94 (n=1,175); 349 from the AmeriSpeak probability-based panel, and 826 from non-probability panels. The survey completion rate was 39% among probability-based panel members in Michigan that were invited to participate. The margin of error is +/-1 to 4 percentage points for questions asked of the full Michigan sample and higher among subgroups.

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