

A GUIDE TO FIBROMYALGIA TREATMENT

Arthritis Today

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Happiness by Popular Demand

One person's
good mood has
far-reaching effects

DOMINO EFFECT. RIPPLE EFFECT.
CHAIN REACTION.

Often, we equate these phrases with a series of unfortunate or negative events. However, new research shows that one person's happiness can trigger a chain reaction of joy that benefits not only his friends, but his friends' friends, and his friends' friends' friends.

"We found that your emotional state may depend on the emotional experiences of people you don't even know, who are two to three degrees removed from you," says Nicholas Christakis, MD, PhD, professor of medical sociology at Harvard Medical School in Boston. Christakis co-authored the study with James Fowler, associate professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego.

Christakis and Fowler measured the emotional well-being of 5,000 individuals over 20 years using answers from the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale: "I felt hopeful about the future," "I was happy," "I enjoyed life" and "I felt that I was just as good as other people." They found that you are 15 percent more likely to be happy if directly connected to a happy person; 10 percent if it's the friend of a friend who is happy; and 6 percent if it's the friend of a friend of a friend.

So next time you're feeling good, share your optimism and enthusiasm with a few friends. You may be brightening the days of more people than you know.

—DANA TURNER