

# Boo! It's Good for You

Being scared can be beneficial to your health



Scary stuff can cause your body to produce healthy chemicals that make you feel happy and secure. (1)

Do you like being spooked?

Halloween will soon be here - the holiday full of tricks and treats and all things frightening and fun. But what happens when you trade your sweets for a scare? The result is much healthier than candy. (2)



## The Positives of Fear

Being frightened can be good for you. Think about your favourite scary book or movie. What happens when something goes bump in the night, or a door creaks or slams, or glass shatters? It often makes us jump. This reaction is **provoked** by fear. (3)

Fear makes your brain flood with healthy chemical substances that excite your mood and release feelings of euphoria, or great excitement. According to Dr. Margee Kerr, a sociologist who studies fear, this

“powerful chemical punch” includes endorphins and dopamine—a natural compound in the body that creates feelings of happiness. (4)

When you’re spooked, your body also produces a chemical called oxytocin. This hormone helps people bond with one another. When people share the experience of being scared, it can make them feel closer. So, if you’re at a haunted house with some pals, that experience can help **solidify** your friendship. “Watch people walking out of a haunted house and you’ll see lots of smiles and high fives,” Kerr says. (5)

### **A Healthy Scare**

There is also some evidence that being scared can help a person **manage** stressful situations. Things like giving a presentation in front of your class or performing in a school play can make us fearful and anxious. But these experiences help build a sort of **endurance** to fear that makes us more confident. “You become more comfortable with the physical experience of fear, and so you’re better able to work through it during tense situations,” Kerr explains. (6)

Though some haunting may be healthy, it’s important to remember that people experience fear in different ways. What may be fun for one person could be too scary for another. And Kerr notes that kids younger than six and or seven can’t separate real and make-believe, so seeing something frightening could have lasting, negative effects. (7)

But for most people who are old enough, a little “boo” now and then isn’t so bad. In fact, it may be positively spook-tacular. (8)

### **ACTIVITIES**

1. Vocabulary –Can you think of a synonym (word with a similar meaning) for the words in blue?
2. Find 2 reasons why being scared could be good for you. (Paragraphs 4 and 5)
3. Why might it be helpful to put yourself in scary situations sometimes? (Paragraph 6)
4. Do you think this article helps us understand why people like watching horror films or going on rollercoaster rides? Explain how.