

# BESTLIFE

## Dr. Faisal Tai of PsychPlus Quoted on The Importance of Touch

health

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### How Many Hugs Do You Get a Day? Science Says It May Not Be Enough

TOUCH IS POWERFUL—AND IT'S ESSENTIAL TO OUR HEALTH.



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Putting aside how many hugs anyone wants or receives, I pressed on, determined to get to the bottom of whether I was likely to perish from not being hugged. "It's true that you can feel better just by receiving another's affectionate touch," says **Faisal Tai**, MD, a board-certified psychiatrist and the **CEO of PsychPlus**. While he would not put a number on how many hugs we actually *need*, he explained what happens to us when we're hugged (or stroked on the top of our heads, or gently kissed on our foreheads—things I would gladly accept in lieu of, or in addition to, hugs).

Tai explains that we all have receptors in our skin that send messages directly to the brain. "Just think about the last time you were given a hug or a pat on the back, or someone put their arm around your shoulders," he says. "You can get a boost of oxytocin, often referred to as 'the feel-good hormone,' from this sort of physical affection. This hormone promotes positive feelings and builds and maintains a positive outlook, which is why it feels so good!"

Research featured in *Biological Psychiatry* explains that **it's long-lasting** too. Tai says the benefits of human touch given to newborns is measurable even 10 years after birth. So maybe I'm okay, if hugs last for a decade? *Hmmm.*