**KIDS FOR LIFE**

**Having kids means you’ll live LONGER – adding ‘two years to your lifespan’**

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Sons and daughters help keep their parents' minds active and provide better care for their folks in old age

**HAVING kids can extend your life by up to two years, a study found.**

Men and women benefit, regardless of the sex of their child or if the parents are married.

Researchers say sons and daughters help to keep their parents’ minds active and provide additional care in old age.

They analysed data on 704,481 men and 725,290 women, looking at marital status and the number and sex of any children they had.

The remaining life expectancy of a 60-year-old man with offspring was 20.2 years, compared with 18.4 years for a childless man.

It means dads benefit from an extra 1 year 10 months of life.

The figures for women were 24.6 years and 23.1 years – a difference of 18 months.

At the age of 60, childless men had a 0.06 per cent greater chance of dying within a year than a bloke with kids.

By the time they hit 90, this difference had increased to 1.47 per cent, as they became more dependent on their youngsters for care.

The differences for women increased from 0.16 per cent to 1.1 per cent over this period, the team from Karolinska Institute, in Stockholm, Sweden, found.

Unmarried men had the greatest benefit of having kids, suggesting they may be more reliant on their children in the absence of a partner.

Study leader Dr Karin Modig said: “Having children is associated with increased longevity in old age.

“That the association increased with parents’ age and was somewhat stronger for the non-married may suggest that social support is a possible explanation.”

Pregnancy affects women’s hormones, which can affect their risk of various diseases, including cancer.

Having kids may also affect lifestyle choices, such as diet and smoking habits, and provide more emotional and social support.

The findings are published in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health.