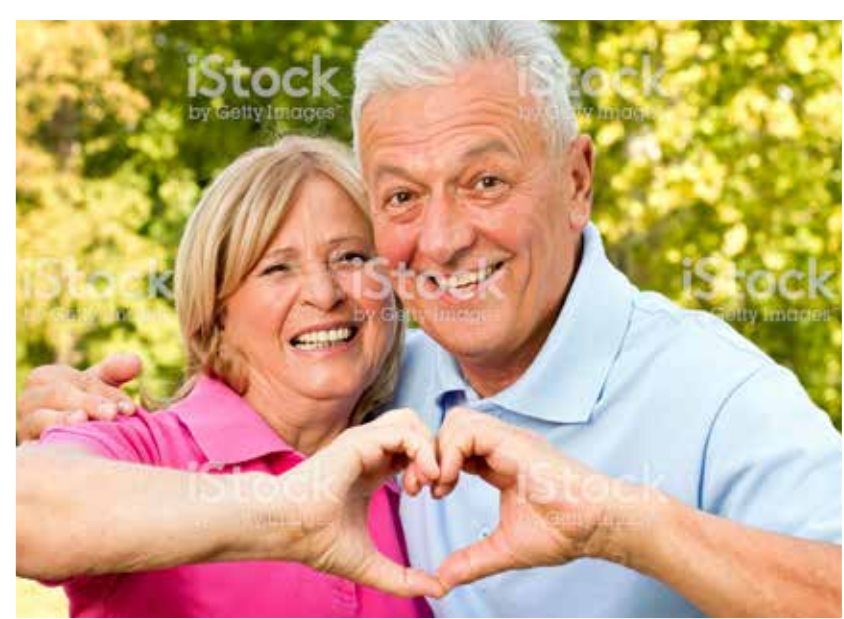


# Health and Wellness Benefits of Green Infrastructure

Prepared by



Time in nature and in green spaces can measurably improve physical and psychological health. Expanding natural and open areas, planting trees, creating bioswales, adding green roofs—all elements of green infrastructure—can potentially move the needle on disease prevention, health promotion, equity, and ultimately, health care cost saving.



**Heart Health** Being in nature reduces blood pressure and positively influences well-being. Being active outdoors can strengthen the heart and boost mental health which positively benefits patients with heart disease. Vegetation in green infrastructure reduces airborne pollutants by absorbing and filtering particulate matter.

**Immune Function and Healing** Patients who see, hear, and experience nature have faster recovery times, less stress and pain, and require less medication. Being outdoors switches the body from “flight or fight” mode to “rest and digest mode” and encourages activity to get blood pumping which strengthens body and immune system. Natural environments promote emotions of awe or wonder which can have anti-inflammatory effects.



**Child Development** Proximity of mother to green spaces is linked to increased birth weight, larger head circumference, and a lower risk of the baby being too small for its gestational age. Nature-play boosts creativity and imagination; encourages young minds to be inquisitive and think critically. Being outdoors provides opportunity for children’s developing eye muscles to exercise and the risk of developing nearsightedness drops.



**Mental Health** Being outdoors is calming and inspiring and boosts mental health in a number of ways: higher levels of happiness, improved overall mood, reduced anxiety, fear, and anger, and lower levels of aggression. Green infrastructure promotes healing and reflection and helps people cope with life.

**Memory and Focus** Time in nature increases the ability to concentrate, is restorative, helps people recover from mental fatigue, reduces anxiety, improves short-term memory and executive attention skills, and increases working memory.



## Active Lifestyle

Proximity to green spaces stimulates physical activity, helping to reduce obesity. People active in natural environments better manage their diabetes. Green spaces encourage people to gather in a community setting and fosters comradery.

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

