

# CONTACT WITH NATURE

In Europe, 75% of the population lives in urban areas and has little contact with nature. However, it is increasingly recognized that this contributes to a rise in diseases, whereas spending time near green spaces and biodiversity has beneficial effects on health.

**Lowers the risk of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and stress**  
People who have regular contact with nature experience a moderate to significant decrease in depression and anxiety scores<sup>1</sup>



**Improves concentration and reduces hyperactivity**  
in ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)



Several theories explain this effect:

- 1 Biophilia :**  
Humans are naturally drawn to natural elements such as light, wind, smells, sounds, landscapes, or animals.
- 2 Attention Restoration Theory :**  
Natural landscapes are rich in elements that promote focus and attention<sup>2</sup>



**Lowers blood pressure**  
Regular walks in nature lead to an average decrease of 4.8 mmHg in systolic blood pressure<sup>1</sup>



**Reduces the risk of diabetes**  
A meta-analysis shows that people with moderate to high exposure to green spaces have a significantly lower incidence of diabetes<sup>3</sup>



**Boosts immunity and microbiota**  
The overly «sterile» nature of urban environments leads to biodiversity loss and depletion of skin flora, increasing allergies and skin diseases. Studies exposing children to forest and rural soil have shown improvements in their immune markers and microbiota<sup>4</sup>

**Reduces mortality**  
Studies have shown that people living surrounded by greenery have a lower overall mortality rate compared to those in urban environments. This highlights the importance of creating parks and giving everyone access to nature.<sup>5</sup>



**Strengthens muscles and the heart**  
Walking regularly in nature helps you take more steps each day, strengthens your muscles, and supports the health of your heart, lungs, and circulation.<sup>2</sup>



## THE SUSTAINABLE PRESCRIPTION



- Try to spend at least 2 hours each week in a park or natural setting
- Garden at home or in community garden
- Participate in conservation and nature observation activities
- Advocate for green spaces and pedestrian-friendly public areas

### When to discuss contact with nature?

Particularly in cases of hypertension, stress, overweight/obesity, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, sedentary lifestyle, respiratory diseases (asthma, COPD), ADHD, anxiety, dysbiosis (constipation), frequent infections, depression, heart failure, or post-surgery recovery.

### REFERENCES

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