

On average, women live 5 years longer than men. It's mostly genetics

Around the world, women live longer, on average. So why do women tend to outlive men?

Two of the main causes are biological, said Virginia Zarulli, an associate professor of demography at the University of Southern Denmark... [Estrogen provides protection against a range of diseases](#), such as [cardiovascular disease](#).

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High levels of testosterone, on the other hand, [have been linked to an increased risk of some diseases](#), such as endometrial and [breast cancer](#) in women and [prostate cancer](#) in men.

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There's also a genetic component at play. Humans have two sex [chromosomes](#): X and Y. Cisgender women have two X chromosomes, and cis men have an X and a Y. "If you think about that, the Y chromosome is an X chromosome with a missing leg. It's missing genetic material," Zarulli said. "Women have this double X chromosome — extra genetic material — which allows them to, for instance, have a backup plan if there is a bad mutation on one of the two X chromosomes. The other X can let them live anyway." This is the case for diseases such as [hemophilia](#), a type of bleeding disorder, and Duchenne muscular dystrophy, which causes the muscles to progressively weaken.

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