ASK THE Wellness DOCTOR

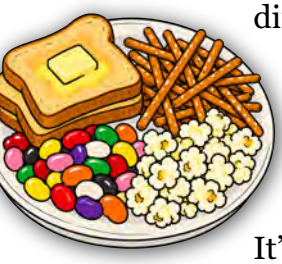
Can being grateful actually improve your health?

Discover the surprising health benefits of gratitude



Taking a few minutes each day to practice gratitude may help improve your mood, support better sleep, and has even been linked to a longer life.

Every November, Charlie Brown and his friends sit down to a Thanksgiving dinner of buttered toast, pretzel sticks, jelly beans, and popcorn.



It's not the feast anyone expected. Peppermint Patty isn't impressed. But by the end of the night, the gang remembers what the holiday is really about: being thankful.

Turns out, that's good advice for your health, too.

Grateful people may live longer

A 2024 Harvard study followed nearly 50,000 older women. Those with the highest gratitude scores had a 9 percent lower risk of dying over the next few years than those with the lowest scores.[1]



Gratitude is good for your health.

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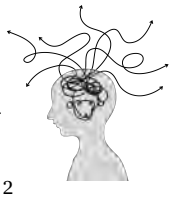
The link showed up for heart disease, cancer, and every other cause of death researchers looked at.

This kind of study can't prove gratitude adds years to your life.

But the link held up even after researchers accounted for other factors, including optimism, faith, and an active social life. Research shows gratitude may also help:



Ease worry & improve mood



Researchers have also found that simple gratitude exercises may lower symptoms of anxiety and depression.[2]

Gratitude isn't a replacement for counseling, medication, or other treatments. But it's an easy, free add-on.

If you've felt down or anxious for more than two weeks, talk with your doctor or a mental health counselor.

GRATITUDE ▶

Ask the Wellness Doctor

▶ **GRATITUDE**



Sleep better

Practicing gratitude may also help you get your Zzzs.

In a review of 19 studies, most found that people who practiced gratitude reported sleeping better.[3]

That's based on how people rated their own sleep, but it's a promising start, especially if you have trouble sleeping.

What gratitude can't do

You may have heard that gratitude can lower blood pressure and blood sugar. But the research is mixed.



So think of gratitude as a boost for your mood and sleep, not a fix for other health conditions.



Make it a habit

Like any healthy habit, gratitude works best when you do it often.

Pick a regular time, like your morning coffee or the drive home, and stick with it.

You don't need a perfect holiday spread to feel thankful.

The Peanuts gang learned that toast and popcorn will do, as long as you stop and notice what's good.

References

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3. Boggiss, A., et al. (2020). A systematic review of gratitude interventions: Effects on physical health and health behaviors. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 135:110165. From: https://tinyurl.com/2c62ntw5

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