

HEALTH AT A GLANCE



The Power of Kindness

"Those who bring sunshine into the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."

—James Matthew Barrie.

Make Time to Be Kind

In the midst of our busy lives, it's easy to get hyper-focused on ourselves, our problems, to-do lists, etc. (especially during the holidays), but making room for random acts of kindness is essential. We know it's good to do good, but research shows that the perks of kindness are not just for the person on the receiving end—they can extend to the one performing the act! Now, these benefits shouldn't be your primary motivation for doing good deeds, so let's just consider them an added bonus. Kindness:

- **Enhances Attitude and Mood:** A single act of kindness can boost your mood and give you a sense of gratification, but those who regularly do nice things are more optimistic, tend to be happier and have greater life satisfaction.
- **Strengthens Social Bonds:** While we should be nice to everyone, doing it for the people in our lives can be even more impactful. Kindness builds stronger relational ties, helps us feel more connected with one another and enhances relationship satisfaction. In addition, these people are more likely to return the favor and provide support when you need it. Being kind also reduces feelings of isolation and social anxiety.
- **Gives You Perspective:** To be kind, you have to pay more attention to what's going on in the world around you, and seeing the needs of others can help you keep things in perspective by reminding you what's really important and making you more grateful for the good things in your life.
- **Improves Self-Worth:** Knowing that you made a positive impact on someone else gives you a sense that what you're doing matters and adds meaning to your life.
- **Fights Stress:** People who do good tend to feel less stressed and have greater resiliency when experiencing rough times.
- **Health Benefits:** Doing good deeds has been shown to lower blood pressure, boost immunity, improve well-being and reduce depression.

Celebrate the Season By Spreading Kindness

The holiday season is the perfect time to start incorporating more random acts of kindness into each day. Here are some ways to make a positive impact in someone else's life—during the holidays and beyond:

- **In 30 Seconds or Less:** Pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru, hold the door for someone, smile at a stranger, give a sincere compliment, put change in an expired meter, give your loved one a hug, give an extra large tip.
- **In a Few Minutes:** Bypass the close parking spot and let someone else have it, give food to a homeless person, make the new person feel welcome, do a household chore you know your partner hates, buy a few extra cans of food and donate them to the food bank.
- **In Less Than an Hour:** Send a card to a friend or family member letting them know how much you appreciate him or her, bring fresh fruit to work for your colleagues and clients, call your grandparents or an important person you've lost touch with.
- **In a Few Hours:** Make a meal for someone you know who is going through a tough time, offer to babysit for a single mom or busy couple so they can enjoy a night out, do yard work, grocery shopping or household chores for an elderly person, go through your home and donate items you rarely use.

For more ideas, visit the following websites:

- Random Acts of Kindness: <http://www.randomactsofkindness.org>
- KindSpring: <http://www.kindspring.org>

