



HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021

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HIGHLIGHTS for the December 2021 Newsletter

How to DASH Away High Blood Pressure

If your blood pressure (or your belly) looks anything like a jolly, old elf you'll need to make some changes. Here's how to change your diet to DASH away high blood pressure.

Manage Your Weight in Just 10 Seconds a Day

What if you could prevent weight gain in just 10 seconds a day? You'd do it, right? Sorry, there's no magic pill, fat diet, or extreme workout that works in 10 seconds. But there is something quick and easy you can do every day....

The Surprisingly-Simple Way to Live Longer

Move more, sit less. You've heard the advice before. Are you active at least 30 minutes a day? Now is always the best time to start. And if a 105-year-old woman can rip down a track and set a world record, chances are pretty good you can go for a walk.

Y-Axis: The Sour Truth About 'Sugar-Free'

Grab the sugar-free option. It's zero calories, or lower than the real deal. That's good, right? Maybe not. Here's the sour truth and 'sugar-free.'

Recipe: Cranberry Apple Stuffing Muffins

How about a low-fat festive muffin or treat? Try making Cranberry Apple Stuffing Muffins.

Take the December Health Challenge!

Practice Gratitude: Adopt simple habits to give thanks.

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question: What can I do to reduce holiday stress?

NEWSLETTER

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THE Y AXIS



The Sour Truth About 'Sugar-Free'



Grab the sugar-free option. It's zero calories, or lower than the real deal.

That's good, right?

Not so fast. Put down the soda and step away from the sugar-free treats.

Artificial sweeteners might not be as sweet as you think.

A recent study found that foods made with artificial sweeteners may stimulate cravings for more sweets and food.⁴

And that could lead to weight gain and other health problems.

Need something sweet?

Eat an apple. Add some berries to cereal. Or drink a glass of water with a squeeze of lemon.

COMMENTS?

Send comments to the editor:

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How to DASH Away High Blood Pressure

Is your blood pressure naughty or nice?

When Santa Claus finally takes a day off to get his blood pressure checked, he's probably in for a surprise. All those cookies, eggnog, extra pounds, and sitting in the sleigh are bad for the heart.

If your blood pressure (or your belly) looks anything like a jolly, old elf you'll need to make some changes.

You're on the Naughty List if...your blood pressure is 120/80 or higher. In case you're wondering, nearly half of all adults in the U.S. have high blood pressure.

But you can change that with the DASH diet... Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension.

Research shows that the DASH diet can help lower blood pressure by 5 points or more in just four weeks.³ That could be low enough to put you on the Nice List (<120/<80)!

DASH diet food guidelines

- Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products.
- Include healthy proteins like fish, poultry, beans and nuts
- Use healthy oils for cooking (like olive oil or avocado oil)
- Limit foods high in saturated fats like fried food, red or processed meats, or full-fat dairy products
- Avoid or limit sugary drinks and snacks.

Making changes to your diet can help lower blood pressure and improve your health.

But don't stop there.

Regular exercise helps control blood pressure, too. Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day. And you may be on the Nice List soon.

MORE

Your guide to lowering blood pressure with DASH <https://tinyurl.com/hbksj8s>

Manage Your Weight in Just 10-Seconds a Day

Daily weigh-in during the holidays prevents weight gain

What if there was a simple way to prevent holiday weight gain?

You know...something that only takes about 10 seconds out of your busy day...especially during the holidays.

You'd probably do it, right? After all, there's a lot of factors at play during the holidays that can tip the scale in the wrong direction like:

- Food and treats at home or the office
- Parties and dining out more
- Vacation, travel, or hosting guests
- Snacking while you prep food

It can start to feel like an impossible task to prevent weight gain and still enjoy the holidays. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Take 10 seconds to do THIS everyday...

1. Step on the scale, and weigh yourself.

2. Record your weight. Write it down on a calendar.

Record it with your phone. Use a mobile app to track your weight. Or keep a log on the refrigerator, bathroom mirror, or in your car.

And make sure it's in a place where you'll see the number on the scale every day. That's it!





Cranberry Apple Stuffing Muffins

How about a low-fat festive muffin or treat? Try making Cranberry Apple Stuffing Muffins.⁵

Ingredients

- 2 tsp canola oil
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 tsp thyme
- 2 tsp sage
- 2 tsp rosemary
- 8 C breadcrumbs, toasted
- 1 apple, peeled and chopped
- 1 C dried cranberries
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 C vegetable broth

Directions

1. Coat a 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Heat oil on medium heat in a large skillet. Sauté celery, onion, and herbs for 5 minutes.
3. Add apples. Sauté for 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Place bread crumbs and dried cranberries in a large mixing bowl. Add sautéed vegetables.
5. Season with salt and black pepper.
6. Add egg followed by broth. Stir well.
7. Spoon mixture into muffin pan. Bake for 18-20 minutes.

The Surprisingly-Simple Way to Live Longer

Even a little running boosts longevity by 27 percent

Julia Hawkins liked to work in her yard. And if the phone rang, she'd run inside to answer it. At her age, that was pretty active...even for a lot of adults half her age.

But that wasn't enough for the retired teacher from Baton Rouge, La., who's earned the nickname "The Hurricane." Last month, at 105 years old, she laced up her running shoes at the Louisiana Senior Games.

On your mark...Get set...Go!

At the sound of the starting gun, Julia took off. With arms pumping and feet churning, she kept her eyes on the 100-meter finish line. And she set a new world record, finishing in 1:02.95.

"I love to run, and I love being an inspiration to others," says Hawkins. "I want to keep running as long as I can. My message to others is that you have to stay active if you want to be healthy and happy as you age."

Want to be healthier, feel better and live longer? Run. It's a proven way to...

- **Live longer.** One recent study found that *any* amount of running may lower the risk

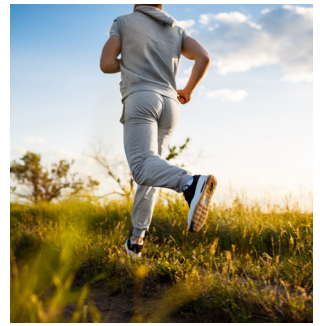
for early death by 27 percent.²

• **Prevent disease:**

Researchers also found that running lowers the risk of death from heart disease by 30 percent and cancer by 23 percent.

If you're not a runner... Pick an activity you enjoy to be more active. Aim for 30 minutes of aerobic activity a day, or 150 minutes a week...

- Take a brisk walk.
- Ride a bike.
- Swim.
- Clean your house as fast as you can.
- Exercise during commercials.
- Hit the gym
- Work in the yard.
- Pick a fitness video and follow along.



MORE

9 ways to stay active during the holidays
<http://tinyurl.com/y7gyktjb>

Manage Your Weight in Just 10-Seconds a Day (continued from page 1)

In a recent study, researchers found that people who weighed in every day during the holidays and visually recorded it...¹

- Maintained their weight, or...
- Lost weight

MORE

How to lose weight & keep it off
<https://tinyurl.com/59syp6wa>

It's a simple way to train your brain to make smart choices about food and exercise during the holidays. Want to keep your weight in check during the holidays? It only takes 10 seconds a day.

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Take the December Health Challenge!

Practice Gratitude: Adopt simple habits to give thanks

Ask the Wellness Doctor:

This month Dr. Don Hall answers the question:

What are some healthy ways to reduce stress?

WELLNESS CHALLENGE

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Practice Gratitude

CHALLENGE

Create daily habits to give thanks

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Practice Gratitude."
2. Create a plan to practice gratitude daily.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When the young Hal Elrod hopped in his car and headed home on an ordinary day in California about 20 years ago, he had a lot to be thankful for.

His family cared about him. He had lots of friends. He was quickly rising through the ranks

at his sales job. And then everything changed in an instant. A drunk driver in a truck crossed into his lane and hit him head on at 80 miles per hour. Elrod's car was thrown into oncoming traffic and hit a second time. The impact broke 11 bones in his body, ruptured his spleen, and caused severe nerve damage.

When rescue workers pulled him from the wreckage, he bled out and died. It took six minutes to revive him, followed by seven surgeries and a long road to recovery.

The Power of Gratitude

For six days after the accident, he was in a coma. When he woke up, he couldn't walk, use one of his arms, or remember recent events. And he was in a lot of pain.

Take the Grateful Quiz

Find out if you could benefit from a gratitude practice.



Y N

1. I spend a lot of time thinking about my problems.
2. I rarely think about what I'm grateful or thankful for.
3. I feel unhappy or unsatisfied about some part of my life.
4. It's hard to think positively when so many bad things happen in the world.
5. I want more out of life, but I'm not sure how to change my situation.

How did you do? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, practicing gratitude can help you. Simple actions like writing in a journal, sending thank you notes, or meditating with a focus on gratitude can improve your outlook on life, improve relationships, help you make better decisions, and improve your mood.

But despite all those challenges, he was still grateful. Grateful to be alive. Grateful for a chance to see his family and friends again. And grateful to get on with living his best life.

"Gratitude and complaining cannot exist at the same time," says Elrod. "Choose the one that best serves you."

It wasn't easy for Elrod to bounce back from the accident. He faced physical, financial, and emotional struggles.

But on days when he couldn't even get out of bed, he realized practicing gratitude was something he could do. It changed his life and helped him write a best-selling book. He has inspired millions of others to practice gratitude.

What are you grateful for?

Think about it, and then take action. Research shows that practicing gratitude can improve your mood, help you feel better about your life, and have a positive impact on others.¹ Take the month-long Health Challenge to Practice Gratitude.

5 ways to practice gratitude at work
<https://tinyurl.com/kyp3q27>



Gratitude Makes a Difference

It's easy to think that something as simple as saying "thank you," sending someone a card, or jotting down a list of things you're grateful for won't make a bit of difference.

note that you drop in the mail or hand-deliver. But you can also give thanks by sending an email, text message or video.

2 Keep a gratitude journal
A digital version, or a paper version. It doesn't really matter. Find a way to write down things you're grateful for. And do it often, daily if you can. Instead of trying to write beautiful prose, spend just a couple minutes writing down things you're grateful for. Or just write a list of five things you're grateful for each day.

3 Practice meditation
Set aside just a few minutes a day to think about things you're grateful for. Health, family, friends, a job, or even things like food, shelter, and water. Find a place you can relax without distractions. Control your breathing. And focus your thoughts on gratitude.

4 Give service
Volunteer. Donate blood. Rake leaves for a neighbor. Help a stranded driver. Or make a meal for a friend. When you give service, you're changing the world for good in a small way. It's also a powerful way to help you recognize things to be thankful for in your own life.

5 Compliment others more often
Did your co-worker do a good job on a project or presentation? Are your kids working hard to get good grades? Was the customer service you received outstanding? Be grateful, and compliment others more often for doing their best.

6 Pay it forward
Here's another way to show gratitude. Take time to recognize all the good in your life, and then pay it forward. Pay the toll fee, grocery bill, or restaurant meal for someone else. Volunteer at a school, mentor students, or help a child learn to read. Plant a tree, donate funds to a charity, or spend more time listening to people who need someone to talk to.

When you make the effort to practice gratitude and give thanks, it changes the way you think. And it can have a positive impact on your health, your outlook on life, and others. What are you grateful for?

Infographic:
How gratitude affects your body
<https://tinyurl.com/yckum35w>

40 simple ways to practice gratitude
<https://tinyurl.com/zb7ajpy>

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• **But have you tried it?** Research shows that gratitude can have a positive impact on your mood, well-being, and outlook on life.²

Gratitude can even make you more productive and help you perform better.

In a recent study, researchers looked at the power of gratitude for a group of nurses.³

Taking care of sick patients is often a stressful and thankless job. It's not uncommon for nurses to experience burnout, health problems or worse. Researchers wanted to find out if gratitude could change that.

For 12 weeks, a group of nurses practiced gratitude and kept track of instances they were thanked by patients or co-workers, or felt grateful.

And you know what? It made a difference. Nurses reported feeling happier. Gratitude helped reduce stress, cut sick days, improve morale, and prevent turnover.

Want to get your life back on track?

Elrod did after his accident. Even though he had limitations at first, he could still practice gratitude. And it worked. There's a proven way to feel better, improve relationships, feel happier, be more productive, or inspire others: Practice gratitude.

An attitude of gratitude can even help:

- Reduce stress
- Improve heart health
- Strengthen the immune system
- Improve quality of sleep
- Maintain healthy habits
- Improve mental health
- Boost self-esteem, and more

6 Ways to Practice Gratitude

Want to improve your mood and your health? Take just a few minutes every day to be thankful. Here are six ways to practice gratitude.¹

1 Write thank-you notes

When you receive a gift, someone helps you out, or you want to let someone know you appreciate them, write a thank-you note. The best kind...a hand-written thank-you



Practice Gratitude

CHALLENGE

Create daily habits to give thanks

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to give thanks and practice gratitude daily.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to practice gratitude.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____		
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_____ Number of days this month I practiced gratitude
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

ASK THE DOCTOR

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Q.

What are some healthy ways to manage holiday stress?

A.

The holidays are supposed to be fun and festive. But if you're stressed out, you might feel like

The Grinch, Ebenezer Scrooge, and Santa's nemesis Krampus all mixed together. Sound familiar? An estimated 62 percent of adults feel "somewhat" or "very" stressed out during the holidays.¹ There's a lot going on with work, family, travel, vacation, shopping, and the everyday stuff...not including the holidays.

So what should you do when you're stressed out and not feeling any holiday cheer?

1. Recognize signs of stress

It's a good place to start. Instead of just trying to put on a happy face, pay attention to how you're feeling. Holiday stress can come in many forms, like:

- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Body aches and pains
- Forgetfulness
- Overeating or drinking too much

If you're stressed out during the holidays, you're not alone. There's no holiday-magic to beat stress, but you can do something about it.

2. Be active

Just 20 to 30 minutes of daily walking, yoga, or other exercise



5 Ways to Beat Holiday Stress

can improve your mood as well as physical health.

It burns up stress hormones, and stimulates the mind to help you relax and think better about your problems.²

3. Breathe

It might sound too simple during a hectic-holiday season, but it really works. Try it:

- Take 10 deep breaths.
- Inhale, then exhale...slowly.

Deep breathing has a calming effect that can reduce stressful feelings such as anger, anxiety, and fear. Making this a regular habit can also help lower blood pressure and increase your energy level.³

4. Get your Zzzs

You might be tempted to stay up late during the holidays and skimp on sleep. But when you don't get enough sleep, hormones linked to stress go up. This can lead to fatigue, weight gain, mood swings, and other health problems.

Aim to sleep 7 to 8 hours a night. If that's a challenge, take a nap during the day too. Adequate sleep can help reduce stress and restore the body to a relaxed state.⁴

ASK THE DOCTOR

Wellness

5. Make the holidays merry and bright

There's more than one way to manage stress during the holidays. Regular exercise, good sleep, and deep breathing can help. Here are some other ways to make the holidays merry and bright:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Read a book.
- Laugh more.
- And make time for a hobby you enjoy.

If you're always stressed out, talk to your doctor or ask a professional for help. You'll feel better and live longer.

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STAYIN' ALIVE

Talking about safety isn't enough.



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