



Practicing Gratitude & Giving Back

The Benefits of a Gratitude Practice

Practicing gratitude is a simple yet powerful way to boost overall wellbeing. When we intentionally focus on the positives in our lives—big or small—we shift our mindset away from stress and toward appreciation. **Research shows that people who regularly practice gratitude experience improved mood, better sleep, stronger relationships, and even enhanced physical health.**

Gratitude doesn't have to be complicated. It can be as easy as writing down three things you're thankful for each day, sending a quick note of appreciation to a coworker, or pausing to notice something you often overlook, like a sunny morning or a kind gesture.

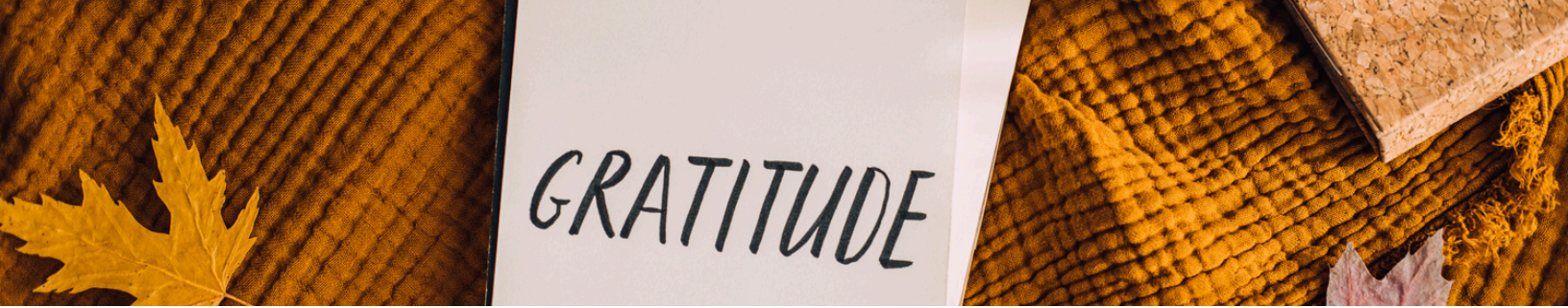
Making gratitude a daily habit helps train your brain to look for the good, even in challenging times. **Over time, this shift increases resilience, reduce negativity, and create a greater sense of balance and joy in both your personal and professional life**

"Gratitude Round"

Before eating, go around the table and have each person share one thing they're grateful for from that day. It can be something big (like finishing a project) or small (like a funny moment with a friend). To keep it fresh, you can add a fun twist:

- **Theme nights** – Share something you're grateful for about nature, school/work, friends, or even each other.
- **Pass the object** – Use a "gratitude token" (like a small stone or candle). Whoever holds it gets to share before passing it on.
- **Challenge mode** – Try not to repeat the same gratitude two nights in a row.





How to Start a Gratitude Journal

Keeping a gratitude journal is an easy and effective way to boost your mood and wellbeing. By taking just a few minutes each day to reflect on what you're thankful for, you can train your brain to notice more positives in everyday life. Here's how to get started:

- **Choose your format** – Use a notebook, planner, or even a notes app on your phone. Pick whatever feels natural.
- **Set aside time** – Morning or evening works best. Just 5 minutes a day can make a difference.
- **Start small** – Write down 3 things you're grateful for each day. They can be simple, like a good cup of coffee or a smile from a coworker.
- **Be specific** – Instead of “I’m grateful for my family,” try “I’m grateful for the fun conversation I had with my child at dinner.”
- **Reflect weekly** – Look back on your entries to remind yourself of the good moments and progress you’ve made.



Healthy Holiday Tips

The holiday season is a time for celebration, connection, and joy—but it can also bring stress, overindulgence, and disrupted routines. Keep your well-being in balance with these simple tips:

- **Eat Mindfully:** Enjoy your favorite holiday foods—just in moderation. Fill half your plate with fruits and veggies before reaching for the desserts.
- **Stay Active:** Sneak in extra movement—take a brisk walk after meals, dance to holiday music, or plan a family activity that gets everyone moving.
- **Sip Smartly:** Alternate alcoholic drinks with water or sparkling water. You'll stay hydrated and avoid extra calories.
- **Manage Stress:** Take short breaks to breathe deeply, stretch, or meditate. Protect your schedule by saying “no” when you need to.
- **Prioritize Rest:** Stick to a regular sleep schedule as much as possible to keep your energy and mood steady.
- **Stay Connected:** Spend time with friends/family—social connections are a buffer against holiday stress.



The Power of Giving Back

Acts of giving—whether through volunteering, donating, or simply lending a helping hand—do more than benefit those in need. They also enrich our own lives in meaningful ways. **Research shows that giving back can reduce stress, improve mental health, and even strengthen physical wellbeing.** It fosters a sense of purpose, builds community connections, and reminds us of the impact we can have on others.

Giving back doesn't have to be grand to be powerful. Small gestures, like mentoring a colleague, participating in a food drive, or checking in on a neighbor, can create ripples of positivity. In the workplace, acts of giving can strengthen team spirit and build a culture of kindness.

When we give, we not only support others—we also nurture gratitude, empathy, and a deeper sense of fulfillment in our own lives.

Sources: "Giving back has been shown to boost happiness, reduce stress, enhance self-esteem and strengthen social connections." — University of Alabama at Birmingham (via UAB News)

Ways to Give Back This Season

- Volunteer at a food shelf or soup kitchen to support families during the holidays.
- Adopt a family through a local nonprofit and provide gifts or groceries.
- Donate winter gear (coats, hats, gloves, boots) to shelters or community drives.
- Support local toy drives (like Toys for Tots) with new, unwrapped gifts.
- Write holiday cards for seniors, veterans, or hospital patients.
- Give blood—a life-saving act that's especially needed during winter months.
- Contribute to a workplace giving campaign for a local or national charity.
- Bake or cook extra and share with a neighbor, friend, or someone in need.
- Shop local and support small businesses during the holiday season.
- Practice random acts of kindness—pay for someone's coffee, leave a generous tip, or shovel a neighbor's driveway.





COVID Vaccine - Message From MN Dept of Health

“State health officials endorse COVID-19 vaccine recommendations from national medical associations. The department also issues standing order/protocol giving pharmacists the option to provide COVID-19 vaccines to patients.”

As the leaves change and cooler weather sets in, fall brings more than pumpkin spice and cozy sweaters—it also marks the beginning of flu season. For workplaces, this is the perfect time to focus on health and wellness initiatives that keep employees protected, productive, and thriving.

Why Fall is the Right Time for Immunizations

Fall is peak flu season, and it’s also an important time to stay current with other recommended vaccines such as COVID-19 boosters, shingles, and pneumonia (depending on age and health status). Immunizations help reduce absenteeism, improve overall employee health, and support a culture of wellbeing at work.

Please reach out to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about vaccinations, or for the full press release from MDH click [HERE](#).



WORKPLACE WELLNESS FUNDING: APPLICATION NOW OPEN

Carver County Public Health is looking for motivated employers that want to strengthen their workplace culture and offer more opportunities to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Workplaces in Carver County are invited to submit project proposals for SHIP funding to assist in implementing sustainable changes in healthy eating, supporting movement throughout the day, breastfeeding support, commercial tobacco-free workplaces and/or mental wellbeing. Proposals are due by January 9th, 2026, at 4:30pm and application information is found [HERE](#).

JOIN THE WORKPLACE WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE

Carver County Public Health has a free opportunity for businesses in Carver County to network and share ideas and resources to create or strengthen their employee wellness programs. Led by our SHIP Workplace Wellness Consultant, meetings are held quarterly in person or virtual. To sign up for this group, contact Kris Keykal, Carver County SHIP Workplace Wellness Consultant at 612.823.4470 or kkeykal@advantagehealth.com.