











November

Member Newsletter

Kindness Is the Best Medicine

Offering kindness is a simple but effective gesture to help others get through these challenging times—and it can help you, too. Researchers found that kindness releases mood-lifting brain chemicals that help lower stress, create emotional warmth, increase self-esteem, protect your heart, improve health outcomes, and can even help you live longer and be more successful! The benefits work best if kindness is repetitive. Here's how to make it a habit.

-  **Just smile.** Smiling releases the feel-good brain chemicals—plus, it's contagious! People have a built-in response to copy facial expressions so you'll likely get plenty of smiles back!
-  **Give acknowledgement to everyone.** This includes the service rep on the phone, doctor's office staff, checkout clerk, and so on. Mention how you appreciate their service and attention. Or, leave little appreciation notes inside your kid's lunchbox or on your partner's windshield. Remember to call your folks, just to tell them you appreciate them!
-  **Pay it forward.** At the grocery store, leave your extra/unwanted coupons by the checkout for someone else to use. Let someone in line in front of you. On public transit, give your seat to someone who is standing.
-  **Ask others if they need help.** You may not be able to help at that moment, but just listening to someone's troubles can do just as much good. Look for opportunities to reach out to others.
-  **Donate what you can.** This can be canned goods, towels to an animal shelter, money or your time—from walking a neighbor's dog to volunteering to read to children or help with schoolwork via Zoom (check with your local library or school district). To volunteer or donate locally, contact the United Way, the Red Cross or visit: <https://www.volunteermatch.org>
-  **Take the high road when interacting with those you dislike or disagree with.** Try asking them thoughtful questions or doing something nice for them.
-  **Show yourself kindness.** Forgiving yourself for your mistakes and not expecting perfection can help you become more empathetic to others.
-  **Consider learning loving kindness meditation.** Here, the focus is on generating compassion for self and others. For a guided session, visit: <https://www.mindful.org/loving-kindness-practice-video/>



It's important to understand what you can do to help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes

Diabetes: What You Should Know

More than 34 million Americans (about 1 in 10) have diabetes, and approximately 95% of them have type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes most often develops in people over age 45, but children and young people are also developing it. It's important to understand what you can do to help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

Fast Facts

- Type 1 diabetes is a disorder that typically begins before adulthood where the body does not make the insulin hormone that helps blood sugar (glucose) enter the cells to be used for energy
- Type 2 diabetes is a condition where the body doesn't properly use glucose for energy
- In people with diabetes, glucose builds up in the blood; if left untreated, this can lead to serious health issues like glaucoma and nerve damage
- Type 2 diabetes can be prevented through healthy lifestyle changes
- While there's no known prevention for type 1 diabetes, healthy lifestyle changes can help better manage this condition

Understand your risk of type 2 diabetes

The cause of type 2 diabetes is not completely understood, but certain factors can put you at risk.

- 📍 Excess weight, including being overweight or obese
- 🍎 Unhealthy diet
- 🚭 Smoking
- 📅 Age 40 or older
- 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Family history of diabetes, specifically a parent, brother or sister
- 🏃 Sedentary lifestyle
- 🏥 Previous or existing medical conditions, including gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, polycystic ovarian syndrome or cardiovascular disease
- 🚶 Lack of exercise

Take action now!

Cultivate Optimism

With so much uncertainty these days, it is hard to stay upbeat, especially if you tend toward pessimism rather than optimism—largely a personality trait resulting from your genetics, upbringing and experience. However, by replacing pessimistic thoughts and practices with more positive ones, you can retrain your brain to be more optimistic, and in turn, enjoy better mental and physical health, no matter what the situation.



Here's how to shift to optimism:

Dispute your pessimistic thoughts and self-talk. Become aware of negative thoughts, feelings and memories that upset you. Write them out, or do a creative project to help draw them out of yourself. Then, practice saying nice things to yourself, avoiding automatic self-criticism. You might need a qualified counselor or another health practitioner to help you with this process.

Increase activities that help you reach a relaxed state. Choose things that make you feel light-hearted or contented such as watching a funny movie, playing with your dog, taking a scented bath, doing yoga, walking in the forest, etc.

Really tune into the good things in your life. Savor that fresh salad and take in a kindly compliment deeply, for example. To prompt this mindset, keep a journal, writing down five things you are grateful for daily.

Hang out with positive-minded, motivated people. Seek those who look forward to what's ahead with excitement, not fear. They tend to attract other optimists, so in time, you will have built an encouraging support system, boosting your own optimism.

Follow healthy habits that support a good mood and positive energy. Get adequate sleep, rest, manage your stress, follow a nutritious diet, exercise regularly, and make supportive social connections. The better you feel, the brighter your outlook will be.

When facing a challenge, focus on achieving solutions, rather than problems. Switching to a solution-based focus immediately gives you a sense of movement, possibility and hope—the keys to optimism. Try to look for any small improvement in the current situation as a solution.

Before sleeping, remind yourself what went well today. Then, when you wake, start thinking about what you want to accomplish and the positive outcome.