



It's the season of gratitude. Between sharing what we're grateful for at family events to having our heartstrings plucked by holiday commercials, gratitude is coming at us from all directions. And it's a good thing. Regularly focusing on the positive aspects of our lives can result in not just a better mindset, but actual physical health benefits.

Share gratitude

Practicing gratitude for five days a week for at least six weeks¹ can:



Reduce depression: People who have a grateful mindset report more feelings of optimism and hope. This results in a better sense of wellbeing.²



Lessen anxiety: Worrying and negative thinking—hallmarks of feeling anxious—are neutralized by active appreciation of the good things in your life.¹



Support heart health: Keeping a gratitude journal can help improve your blood pressure. This practice can also decrease inflammation.³ Positive thoughts matter.



Relieve stress: Taking the time to be thankful can help you manage stress better and even improve your sleep.

Sharing is caring

Part of your practice could be letting your friends, coworkers and loved ones know you appreciate them. And by doing that, you both get the benefits. There are many ways you, and those around you, can show gratitude this season.⁴

Journal

When you get a new notebook for yourself, buy an extra and gift it to a friend. Inscribe it with kind words. Maybe your future coffee dates start with each of you taking a few minutes to jot down some positive thoughts. This accountability works.



Gratitude jar

Make one for yourself and another for a loved one. Write down things you are grateful for on little slips of paper and drop them in the jar. When you need a quick pick-me-up, take a couple of notes out of the jar to remind yourself what's good in your life. Start your gift jar of with a few things you appreciate about your loved one.

Thank-you notes

Many of us are conditioned to write thank-you notes just for physical gifts. Expand your scope. Send little notes when you have a great chat. Or when a friend does or says something you appreciate. By sharing your gratitude, you're allowing them to get the same mental benefits you do as the one practicing gratitude.



Gratitude is an attitude we can all benefit from. Pass it on.

¹<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10902-020-00261-5>

²<https://clinmedjournals.org/articles/ijda/international-journal-of-depression-and-anxiety-ijda-4-024.php?jid=ijda>

³https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335018983_Gratitude_and_health_An_updated_review

⁴<https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-exercises/>



Create an “active” tradition

When we think of traditions, we think of heartwarming activities we share with loved ones. These routines or rituals are often passed down through generations. They hold special meaning and significance for those involved, whether they are for family by birth or your family by choice.

Think about seasonal activities, like apple picking or a leaf peeping hike. Special events like birthday or anniversary celebrations can become traditions. Traditions can even be something like a funny handshake, a dance or the retelling of a special story.

Sharing these moments deepens the bonds between loved ones. They increase your sense of security, stability and belonging.¹

Physical activity is so important, especially when your gatherings revolve around meals. Why not merge the two and create active traditions?



Active actions to adopt

Moving your feet and your body are excellent ways to feel better mentally and physically. Beyond front yard touch football or a fun run, consider making these your active traditions:



Get moving

Walking for a few minutes after a meal can help regulate your blood sugar.² When your group goes for a walk outside, there are added benefits. Being in nature improves your thinking and reasoning and helps make your mind and body relax.³



Dance it out

Between dinner and dessert, take a break from clearing dishes and pump up some dance music. Music stimulates your mind and activates social, emotional, sensory and motor circuits.⁴ Perhaps the oldest, or youngest, in the room chooses the music. Either way, you're sharing a moving experience.



Parlour games

Old school living room games⁵ can get heated, especially when the gang's all there. In charades, someone physically acts out words or phrases for others to guess. In Pictionary, one player draws the clue while their teammates guess what it is before a timer runs out.

**Spending time together around the holidays is the perfect time to create new traditions.
Why not make it an active one this year?**

¹<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/singletons/202411/the-power-of-family-traditions-count-the-ways>

²<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40279-022-01649-4>

³<https://health.ucdavis.edu/blog/cultivating-health/3-ways-getting-outside-into-nature-helps-improve-your-health/2023/05>

⁴<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/science-of-choice/202505/the-power-of-dance-and-its-benefits-for-mind-and-body>

⁵<https://victorianchildren.org/parlor-games/>



Thankful for spice: The healthiest way to add flavour

Herbs and spices are calorie-free flavour boosters that can transform any dish. Dried spices like cumin, paprika and ginger add depth and complexity to flavour. And they can be used to make even the least popular items delicious.

Teenagers eat
18% more vegetables
when seasoned with herbs and spices.¹



In addition to making foods taste better, many spices come with health benefits of their own.²



Black pepper is a source of antioxidants and helps your body absorb nutrients like vitamin C.³



Cayenne pepper gets its heat from capsaicin. It contains antioxidants and vitamins A and C that help fight cell damage.⁴



Cinnamon has been shown to improve blood sugar levels.⁵



Cumin has been used as a natural remedy throughout history. Studies are looking into its effect on symptoms of diabetes and heart disease.⁶



Garlic has been associated with reduced blood pressure in people with hypertension.⁷



Ginger works in both sweet and savory dishes. It offers relief from nausea.⁸



Cardamom shows promise in the prevention and treatment of disorders related to metabolic syndromes.⁹



Turmeric has been used in traditional medicine practices for centuries. It has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.⁹

Add a sprinkle of health to your dishes and enjoy the delicious, layered flavours spice brings to the following recipes.

Chai tea

Makes: 8 servings | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 16 mins

The spices in this traditional tea will warm you up from the inside. Add dairy or non-dairy milk to make it a chai latte.¹⁰

Ingredients

- 2 quarts water
- 15 cloves, whole
- 20 cardamom pods
- 20 black peppercorns
- 3 sticks cinnamon
- 8 slices ginger, inch thick, no need to peel
- ½ tsp black tea leaves, regular or decaf (approximately 2 tea bags)

Preparation

Bring water to a boil in a medium-sized saucepan. Add the cloves and boil one minute. Using a mortar and pestle, crush cardamom pods and peppercorns. Add the cardamom, peppercorns, cinnamon and ginger to the saucepan. Cover and boil for 15 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat, add the black tea and let it cool. Strain all the spices and tea leaves out, discard them and serve hot.

Nutrition (as prepared)

Serving size: 235 ml



Calories: 15 | Total Fat: 0.4 g | Saturated Fat: 0.1 g | Sodium: 3 mg | Cholesterol: 0 mg
Total Carbohydrates: 3.7 g | Fibre: 1.5 g | Sugars: 0.2 g | Protein: 0.4 g | Potassium: 68 mg

Maple-spiced pecans

Makes: 8 servings | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 15 mins

Pecans are a good source of fibre, protein and antioxidants. These sweet-and-spicy nuts are delicious on their own or as a topper for salad or yogurt. They make a perfect gift when packaged in a decorative glass jar or cellophane bag with a ribbon.¹¹

Ingredients

- 1 egg white
- 2 Tbsps pure maple syrup
- 2 tsps ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp cayenne
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ lb pecan halves
- Cooking spray (optional)



Preparation

Preheat the oven to 325 F. In a large glass or metal bowl, whisk the egg white until frothy. Whisk in the maple syrup. Whisk in the cinnamon, ginger, cayenne and salt. Using a spatula, gently fold the pecans into the egg whites, coating them evenly. To prevent the nuts from sticking, line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat, parchment paper or lightly spray the baking sheet with cooking spray. Spread the pecans onto the baking sheet in a single layer, separating any nuts that stick together. Bake for 8 minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Using a spatula or spoon, break up any clumps. Return the pan to the oven and bake for 7 minutes. Remove the baking sheet from the oven. Stir the nuts again. Cool the nuts to room temperature before storing them in an airtight container.

Nutrition (as prepared)

Serving size: 1 oz



Calories: 206 | total fat: 21 g | saturated fat: 2 g | sodium: 97 mg | cholesterol: 0 mg
total carbs: 8 g | fibre: 3 g | sugars: 5 g | protein: 3 g | potassium: 135 mg

¹<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32999533/>

²<https://health.umms.org/2023/01/03/cooking-with-spices>

³<https://www.pharmacist.com/Blogs/CEO-Blog/black-pepper-extract-and-cyp3a4-inhibition>

⁴<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/cayenne-pepper-benefits>

⁵<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10708057/>

⁶https://journals.lww.com/nutritiontodayonline/fulltext/2021/05000/cumin_potential_health_benefits.8.aspx

⁷https://journals.lww.com/nutritiontodayonline/fulltext/2025/03000/potential_benefits_of_spices_in_moderating_blood.5.aspx

⁸https://journals.lww.com/nutritiontodayonline/fulltext/2023/11000/ginger_update_potential_health_benefits.9.aspx

⁹<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10708057/#sec5-nutrients-15-04867>

¹⁰<https://www.verywellfit.com/yogi-tea-chai-3566870>

¹¹<https://recipes.heart.org/en/recipes/heart-healthy-maple-spiced-pecans>

Webinar Spotlight

Understanding the Flu: Protecting Yourself and Others

In September, Dr. Karolina Filipowska led a timely webinar on flu season preparedness, sharing practical guidance on prevention, vaccination, and recovery to help Canadians stay healthy and protect their communities.

Key takeaways:

- Flu prevention starts with everyday actions like hand hygiene, avoiding close contact when sick, and staying home if unwell.
- Annual vaccination offers the best protection, especially for higher-risk groups – early fall is ideal.
- If you get sick, rest, hydrate, and consider antivirals (when advised) to recover faster.

At its core, flu preparedness means taking proactive steps to stay healthy and protect those around you.

Download the Flu Summary Sheet

Did you miss this webinar?

You can still watch this webinar and explore more expert-led talks anytime in our [on-demand archive](#). Revisit the strategies, insights, and resources designed to help you live healthier and feel more supported.

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