

# Well~Connected



## Gratitude and the Positive Effects On Your Brain

We tend to go through life as if we are owed lucrative jobs, fancy new cars and picture-perfect lives that would make a Hallmark show envious. Our American culture seems to be driven to always want bigger, better, and more—to never be satisfied with what we currently have. Goals and ambition are great, but don't lose sight of all you have achieved along the way. When is the last time you took a moment to pause and reflect on everything you have, where you have come from and all that you have received or accomplished this week, year, decade?

*"Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more."*

*"If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough."*

*-Oprah Winfrey-*

A recent research study at Indiana University found that expressing gratitude through writing may have lasting effects on the brain. While the findings are still being explored, they suggest "practicing gratitude may help train the brain to be more sensitive to the

experience of gratitude in the future and could contribute to improved mental health over time."<sup>1</sup>

Try to start each day with a few moments of grateful reflection. Choose a gratitude exercise below and see how your week is positively impacted.

**1. Why are you grateful for YOU?** Are you grateful for how you overcame a difficult situation? Are you grateful for waking up to a healthy body? For a task you completed?

**2. Write a gratitude letter to a friend, colleague, or past mentor telling them why you are grateful for them.** Has someone positively influenced your life and you never really had the opportunity to properly thank them? Maybe you weren't aware of their impact in the moment, but in looking back, they played a key role.

**3. Volunteer or do a favor for someone.** Leave a plant on a coworker's desk or take the neighbor's trash to the curb for them. Perform a small act of kindness for someone and start a ripple effect.

**4. Write an email to a frontline hero.** Your local nursing home, hospital, school or grocery store has selflessly been serving the community they love for months. Let them know that they are not alone.

1. [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_gratitude\\_changes\\_you\\_and\\_your\\_brain](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain)



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## Reduce Food Waste: How To Use More Of What You Buy

Food waste is a big problem in the United States. On average, Americans waste 40 percent of their food every day: that's about one pound of food per person, per day. You may not even realize how much food you're throwing away—plus the money you've spent on it. The demand for food, plus the amount being wasted, puts a strain on supply and demand in our country. But with a few tricks for how to not waste food, you can help ease the burden on the farms and factories that produce it... and in the end, save yourself some hard-earned money while you help out.



Check out these tips for getting more out of the plant and animal products you purchase.

### How to use the whole plant or animal

Did you know you might be throwing away usable portions of your food? Try the following to get more meals and use out of your food items:

- **Create tasty side dishes.** You can use stems of veggies by sauteing or blending them into pesto, slaw or broth.
- **Make snacks.** You can roast veggie seeds (like squash seeds), then salt lightly for a tasty snack.
- **Grow your own food.** Plant fruit and veggie seeds (based on your geography and climate) in your garden to grow again.
- **Make tea.** You can use the cores and peels of fruit (such as apples and oranges) to make homemade fruit tea.
- **Freshen your space.** Fruit rinds, especially citrus fruits, can be dried for a natural air freshener.
- **Soup, anyone?** Meat scraps and bones are useful to make soup, stock or gravy.
- **Give your garden a boost.** Eggshells and coffee grounds (and just about any fruit or vegetable waste) can serve as compost for homemade fertilizer. If you've never composted before, why not give it a try?

### Waste Not, Want Not

Avoiding food waste doesn't have to be hard! Cutting back on the amount of food you throw out can help preserve our environment and help feed those around you.



The human body is an amazing thing! Everything has to work correctly for you to look and feel your best. You won't know the real status of your health until you have a screening. The Empower Wellness Screening Program can be the first step towards understanding your health and preventing illness.

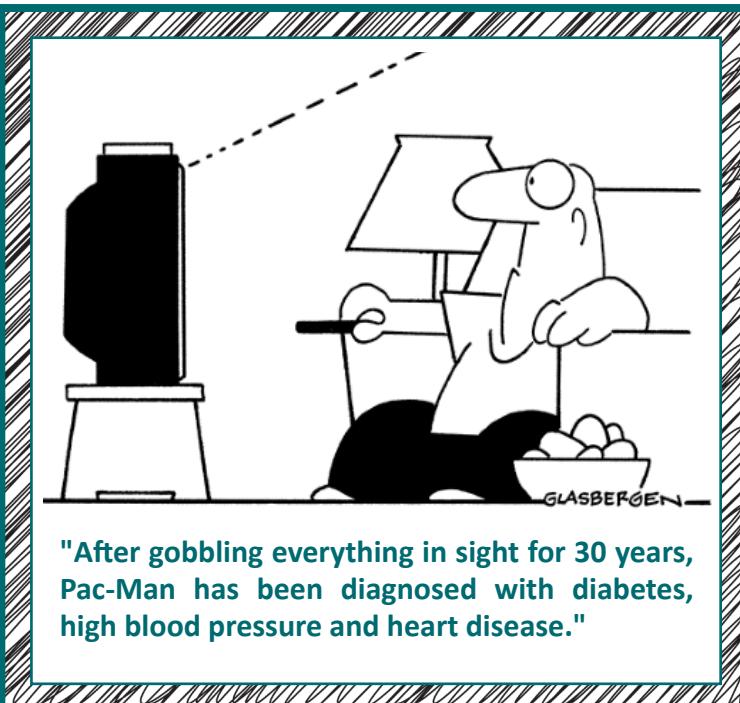
Take 10 minutes and participate in this year's program! Nothing is more important than maintaining your health.

### TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH...

- **25%** of American adults have 2 or more chronic health conditions - Do you know if you have any chronic conditions?
- **70%** of deaths in the U.S. are attributed to chronic conditions - A simple check up could save your life!
- **46%** of deaths in the U.S. are due to Heart Disease or Cancer. You can't feel either until they are at an advanced stage. Testing is the only tool we have for early detection.
- **Up to 90%** of the most serious health issues can be avoided and/or prevented.

**SIGN UP TODAY!**

[EmpowerHealthServices.info](http://EmpowerHealthServices.info)



# Fit Tip: FIBER

## WHAT IS FIBER?

Fiber is a carbohydrate that the body can't break down. This plant-based food passes through the body undigested.

There are two types of fiber:

- **Soluble** (found inside the plant) dissolves in fluid and absorbs water. It aids in lowering glucose levels and cholesterol.
- **Insoluble** (found outside the plant) dissolves in fluid but doesn't absorb it. It helps to move food through the digestive system and aids in preventing constipation.

## RECOMMENDED INTAKE?

In a 2,000 calorie diet, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends:

- **Women:** 25 grams/daily
- **Men:** 38 grams/daily

## BENEFITS

Can reduce the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, diverticular disease and breast cancer.

### FIBER-RICH FOODS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apples</li> <li>• Beans/Lentils</li> <li>• Avocado</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole grains</li> <li>• Berries</li> <li>• Oats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Okra</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Corn</li> </ul>
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### TIPS FOR INCREASING INTAKE



Swap whole fruit for drinking fruit juice



Eat brown rice and whole grains instead of white bread, rice and pasta



Choose vegetables over chips, crackers or french fries



Top salads with beans, seeds or nuts

**Q:** I am 45 years old and cannot afford to eat healthy and certainly don't have the time. My problem is my good cholesterol is low, my bad cholesterol is high and I have a high glucose reading. My doctor says I have to change my ways.

It's often very difficult to change a habit because someone else thinks you should. The only way many of us are able to lead healthier lives is by focusing on what motivates us. Rather than dwelling on how much it costs to eat healthy, or how much time is involved in taking better care of yourself, you may want to make a list of the reasons *why* changing your ways may be worthwhile. What questions could you ask yourself that would really motivate you? Do you want to eat healthier to avoid taking medications? Do you want to set a good example for your children? Do you want to have the energy and ability to play with your grandchildren? When you get into your 70's or 80's, how active do you want your life to be? Answering these types of questions may give you the motivation to "change your ways".

Ask the  
Health  
Coach



# — Under Pressure —

## TAKE A BREAK OR ASK FOR HELP

How do you feel about asking for help? For some, it is one of the hardest things to do. We might be in charge, have people relying on us, or be full of pride. None of us are infallible. The pressure can build until we feel we are over our heads. Our instinct – or what we are taught – is to buckle down and ride out the storm. But consider, in those moments, we should work smarter, not harder. The human mind needs time to process information. That's one of the reasons we sleep, but who can sleep when we have seemingly urgent things to do? Moreover, the world for many is not rest-friendly. We might think we are taking a break by bingeing a show or scrolling social media, but the brain is active – particularly if the content is negative. Thus, not much rest is happening. The secret to burnout is that you may not realize you are in the middle of it. This is because you have put your head down and focused on getting through the day for weeks, months, and years. A busy life, too many commitments, and high expectations leave little room for breaks. Yet breaks are needed to recover, get stronger, and see fresh perspectives. So how do we stay flexible? We can gain more self-control by observing our reactions. Some practice meditation and others simply put away their phone, close their computer, sit back, close their eyes, and relax their breathing. Our observed reactions can be insightful. When you feel the need to be strong, consider being vulnerable. Remember, resilience is not only about strength. It is about embracing that it is okay to take a break or ask for help.



## Fall 2021 Wellness Campaign



### WELLNESS COORDINATOR AWARDS

#### *Vivacious Vocalist*

**Deanna Hurst**  
Yarnell ESD

#### *Newcomer of the Year*

**Brenda Mangum**  
Holbrook USD

#### *Outstanding Performance*

**Mayra Martinez**  
Red Rock ESD

#### **Erin Roggenstein & Megan Ward**

Pine Strawberry ESD

## Fitbit® Challenge Winners

### AUGUST

Claryed Rasmussen  
Liberty ESD

### SEPTEMBER

Traci Sparks  
Wellton ESD

### OCTOBER

Cynthia Colbert  
Patagonia ESD