

GOOD HEALTH TIMES

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Being **Kind**
Is **Good** For
Health!

Seasonal
Affective
Disorder
(SAD)

5 Foods
To Fight
Prostate
Cancer

Being Kind Is Good For Health!



Something To Think About

“Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see”

Mark Twain

With the festive season fast approaching our attention turns to giving and receiving gifts.

Giving and receiving are both part of the same universal flow of energy, the yin and the yang of life. Giving starts the receiving process. The more you help others, the happier you become; and the happier you become, the more likely you will be to help others. Expressing kindness to others can strengthen your psychological fitness, physical health, relationships as well as being a terrific happiness booster. When you commit to become kinder and more compassionate, you develop more perspective and are better able to see your own problems in a more realistic light. So get into the happiness-inducing habit of giving something to everyone you meet – even if it is only the gift of your attention or your smile. Kindness encourages you to be more open and future-orientated, feeling better and more confident about your own intrinsic good nature. You see yourself as being more caring, compassionate and altruistic; reducing feelings of stress, hostility and helplessness.

Being kind can bring on a ‘helpers high’; an initial feeling of euphoria followed by a longer period of emotional wellbeing and contentment.

Kindness and the act of giving to others brings on the happy emotions, especially Love, and Hope, so good for your physical health. This may be as a result of kindness activating the vagus nerve, the longest nerve in the body, which controls the body’s relaxation response (also known as the parasympathetic nervous system; slowing heart rate, and lowering blood pressure.) The vagus nerve also interacts with nerves that regulate emotional expression, eye contact and reception to human speech; influencing release of cardio-protective hormones like oxytocin. This encourages closeness and bonding and releases nitric oxide which dilates blood vessels and lowers blood pressure.

Kindness boosts happiness and can boost feelings of joyfulness, realistic optimism and resilience. Being kind can bring on a ‘helpers high’; an initial feeling of euphoria followed by a longer period of emotional wellbeing and contentment. Kindness also gives people a strong sense that they are doing something that matters which feeds into their values, mission and sense of meaning. Kindness can be highly contagious and experiencing kindness can give you a feel good factor, encouraging you to go out and do something to help others. Think of the expanding ripple that spreads outwards across a pond when a pebble is thrown in. Kindness can start a similar chain reaction of positivity; your committing to be more kind to others this festive season can lead others to be more generous to others who in turn are grateful and kinder to others. Spread the kindness this festive season!



Health Tip

When it comes to alcohol and your wellbeing, it's very much a case of 'less is more.' Alcohol is associated with, more than sixty adverse physical, psychological and emotional health conditions.

5 FOODS TO FIGHT PROSTATE CANCER

Prostate cancer in men is on the rise in the Western World, and is linked to the growing levels of obesity and the typical associated high sugar, high animal fat diet.

A diet rich in fruit and vegetables, omega 3 fats, nuts, seeds and whole grains (while minimising sugar, processed foods and saturated fat) holds true for your prostate health as it does for your health in general. However there are some foods that have specific prostate cancer prevention properties.

Let's have a closer look at my favourite five.

- 1 Tomatoes, especially cooked tomatoes are rich in a powerful cancer preventing antioxidant called lycopene. Foods like watermelon, apricot and pink grapefruit are also rich in lycopene.
- 2 Kale has powerful phytochemical and antioxidant properties that can scavenge cancer cells.
- 3 Walnuts and other nuts are rich in protein and health boosting omega -3 fats and have other properties that support prostate health.
- 4 Mushrooms support the immune system and have a wide range of anti tumour properties especially Shiitake mushrooms.
- 5 Green Tea is rich in antioxidants and polyphenols which can be very helpful as part of your strategy for cancer prevention. Go for the Matcha and Sencha varieties of Japanese green tea leaves if you can get them.

Seasonal Affective Disorder(SAD)

Also known as Winter Blues, SAD is a type of mood flatness and sluggishness that ebbs and flows in a seasonal pattern; often beginning in the Autumn as the days get shorter and most severe in the Winter months.

Risk factors include

- living in countries far north or south of the equator
- family history of mood disorder
- personal history of mood disorder
- younger age groups
- more commonly seen in women but men can be affected more severely.

Symptoms of SAD

These symptoms can overlap with symptoms of clinical depression but tend to be at the milder end of the spectrum. You may experience some or all of the following symptoms: Sluggishness, less energy, increase in appetite and weight gain, needing more sleep, social isolation.

If you have concerns about your wellbeing, see your GP or health professional who will be able to support you in making the most appropriate treatment choices.

What Causes SAD?

While the precise cause isn't fully understood, lack of sunlight is thought to disrupt the body's internal clock, resulting in lower serotonin levels and symptoms of depression.

Give Me Five!

In this season of Thanksgiving, here are five ways to boost the habit of gratitude and appreciation:

- 1 Want what you have!
- 2 Write it down! Write down 3 things you feel grateful for.
- 3 Recognise and appreciate a work colleague.
- 4 Write someone a one page gratitude letter.
- 5 Be kinder, to others and to yourself!

Treatment For SAD

There are a range of treatment

options which may include light therapy, talking treatment, and regular exercise.

- **Exercise really** is the greatest pill of all and boosts brain chemicals to enhance mood including serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin. In addition exercise is a great way to destress and is a great natural stress buster.
- **Vitamins** particularly B vitamins and vitamin D can be helpful.
- **Try and get outdoors** during day light if even for a lunchtime stroll.
- **Boost your dietary intake of omega 3 fats** (oily fish, free range eggs, nuts, seeds, kale) and reduce processed foods and sugary carbs.
- **St Johns Wort** has been used for many years as a more natural brain tonic and treatment for SAD. It comes from the plant hypericum perforatum and can help restore brain serotonin levels.
- Some advocate melatonin supplements to help regulate the internal body clock. Sometimes conventional antidepressants may be needed.

 DR. MARK ROWE

For more on releasing the happiness within and the small choices that make big changes, visit www.doctormarkrowe.com

