



IN THIS ISSUE

**Wrapping Up 2024
with the Gift of Giving
Back Month**

Additional Resources

2025 Wise & Well Webinars – Save
the Dates

Monthly Moves

A HIIT Holiday Workout

Recipe

Yorkshire Pudding



Wise & Well

Welcome to the Wise & Well Newsletter, where we promote whole-person well-being each month and highlight health-related topics to help you be your best.

Wrapping Up 2024 with the Gift of Giving Back

With the holiday season in full swing, many of us will likely get caught up in the blizzard of merriment and end-of-year activities typical to December. The days whirl together as we navigate the sights and sounds that form a sort of seasonal symphony — from shopping and parties to balancing work and what-to-do with the kids home from school — all the while finding ourselves fruitlessly wandering the aisles with our to-do lists, wondering if we'll check every box before the year draws to a close.

It's the most wonderful time of the year, some may say, their voices bright with festive cheer. Yet amid all this festive hustle and bustle, it's important to recognize that for just as many other folks, the rising costs of housing, food and daily necessities are making each day a careful balancing act, where joy is hard to come by and the preparation for a simple holiday meal feels like a challenge.

In times like these, when the gap between abundance and necessity feels especially wide, it's important that we hearken back to the true meaning of the season — giving. The spirit of giving doesn't require grand gestures or elaborate plans. Rather, it's the simple acts of kindness and community care that can thoughtfully bridge these disparities, one compassionate moment at a time.

Why Giving Matters Now More Than Ever

The challenges facing our communities are significant. Many families are struggling to make ends meet, and these hardships often disproportionately affect our most vulnerable neighbors. During the season that symbolizes joy and abundance, we have an extraordinary opportunity to make a meaningful difference in others' lives, all while enhancing our own well-being.

There is solid evidence that giving back creates a phenomenon known as a "helper's high" — a feeling of elation, increased energy and calm that comes from helping others. Giving causes feel-good chemicals like serotonin and dopamine to release in our brains, boosting our mental health. As a further benefit, many people who give back enjoy lower blood pressure, increased longevity and stronger social connections. Essentially, when we give,

we create a positive ripple effect that benefits both the giver and the receiver.

Making a Difference: From Minutes to Months

The beauty of giving lies in its flexibility. Whether you have fifteen minutes or several months to spare, there are countless ways to create change in your community. The key is finding opportunities that align with your available time, resources and personal strengths. From quick acts of spontaneous kindness to long-term commitments that build lasting impact, every contribution matters. Here are some ways you can make a difference, whatever your schedule allows:

Quick Acts of Kindness (15 Minutes or Less)

Because even the smallest gestures can brighten someone's day:

- Leave a generous tip for service workers.
- Share a genuine compliment with a stranger.
- Pay for the person behind you in the drive-through.
- Send an encouraging text to someone who might be struggling.
- Drop off extra groceries at a community fridge.

Weekend Warriors (A Few Hours)

When you have a bit more time to spare:

- Sort donations at a local food bank.
- Help an elderly neighbor with winter preparations.
- Participate in a community clean-up.
- Bake treats for first responders or teachers.
- Write letters to seniors in nursing homes.

Lasting Impact (Ongoing Commitments)

For those ready to create sustainable change:

- Mentor a student through local youth programs.
- Volunteer monthly at a soup kitchen.
- Start a neighborhood giving circle.
- Organize recurring food drives at work.
- Share professional skills with nonprofits.

Making Giving a Family Affair

Children learn compassion by example, and the holiday season offers perfect opportunities to start meaningful traditions:

- Let kids help pick out items for food bank donations.
- Create “kindness calendars” with one small giving task each day.
- Have family members pool their coffee money for a week to help a neighbor in need.
- Start a “giving jar” where loose change funds random acts of kindness.
- Make gift-wrapping a group activity for donated presents.

The Ripple Effect of Generosity

When we give, we create waves of positive change that extend far beyond our immediate actions. A single act of kindness can inspire others to pay it forward, creating a chain reaction of goodwill throughout our community. This holiday season, let’s remember that every gesture, no matter how small, contributes to weaving a stronger social fabric that supports us all.

As we turn the final pages of 2024, remember: it’s never too late to start writing a story of kindness. The best chapter may be the one you begin today.



Additional Resources

2025 Wise & Well Webinars – Save the Dates!

Looking to plan ahead?

Next year’s Wise & Well Webinars will take place on the following dates from Noon – 1:00 p.m. ET:

- January 14
- March 11
- May 13
- July 8
- September 9
- November 4

Please save the dates and keep an eye out for NFP’s Corporate Benefits Latest Insights emails for more details.

Also, please check out our [Wise & Well Training Center](#), where we share the webinar flyers and registration links as they become available.



Monthly Moves

A HIIT Holiday Workout

The holiday season can be fast-paced. So maybe it’s appropriate to incorporate fast bursts of activity to help you survive the season. High-intensity interval training (HIIT) delivers maximum benefits in minimal time as it works by alternating short periods of intense exercise with lower-intensity movements.

Most HIIT workouts last anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes, which gives you plenty of time to fit in all of your other plans for the day. To make your exercise session more festive, crank up your favorite holiday music during it to help keep you motivated.

Try this no-equipment-needed HIIT workout is made up of five exercises. Complete the circuit three times. Between circuits, rest for 30 seconds before jumping back into it.

Jolly Jumping Jacks: Traditional jumping jacks. 20 reps (beginners) or 40 reps (advanced).

Santa Squats: Traditional squats. 10 reps (beginners) or 20 reps (advanced).

Put on Your Yamulke, Here Comes Pushups: Traditional pushups. 10 reps (beginners) or 20 reps (advanced).

Partridge in a Pear Plank: Traditional planks. 30 seconds (beginners) or 40 seconds (advanced).

Chestnuts Roasting on a Single-Leg Glute Bridge: 5 reps per leg (beginners) or 10 reps per leg (advanced). See steps below on how to complete this glute bridge exercise:

1. Lie on your back with your palms face down by your side.
2. Extend one leg, squeeze your glutes, and push into your other leg.
3. While keeping your upper back in contact with the floor, lift your hips until your extended leg forms a straight line with your back.

Taken and adapted from Bon Secours.

Sources: blog.bonsecours.com



Yorkshire Pudding

Yorkshire pudding and prime rib go together like cookies and milk, especially during the holiday season. With just four ingredients and ready in only 30 minutes, you'll have a delicious side dish made grand and burnished like a crown.

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup pan drippings from roast prime rib of beef

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.
2. Sift together the flour and salt in a bowl. In another bowl, beat together the eggs and milk until light and foamy. Stir in the dry ingredients just until incorporated. Pour the drippings into a 9-inch pie pan, cast iron skillet or square baking dish. Put the pan in oven and get the drippings smoking hot. Carefully take the pan out of the oven and pour in the batter. Put the pan back in oven and cook until puffed and dry, 15 to 20 minutes.

Sources: [foodnetwork.com](https://www.foodnetwork.com)



Wise & Well

Tips

Try sending our Wise & Well Tips of the Week to your employees for quick, easily digestible health and well-being tidbits they can incorporate into their daily lives.

– Your Wise & Well Team

Many people deal with stress like work, family issues, health concerns and financial obligations every day. When you add in the holidays, the normal parts of everyday life that commonly contribute to heightened stress levels increase even more. Given that minimizing the chronic stress of daily life as much as possible can support your overall health, this month, focus on these evidence-based ways of giving back to relieve stress.

December 6

Start Small, Start Today

Keep a few \$5 coffee shop gift cards in your wallet this week. When you spot someone working hard during the holiday rush – a delivery person, crossing guard, or store clerk – hand one over with a genuine thank you. These micro-moments of giving create ripples of holiday cheer.

December 13

Make it a Family Filter

Before bringing new holiday gifts into your home, gather the family to find good-condition items to give away. But here's the twist. Instead of asking, "Should we donate this?" ask, "Could this make someone else's holiday brighter?" This small shift in perspective transforms decluttering into meaningful giving.

December 20

The Gift of Time

During this busiest week of the season, carve out just two hours for someone else. Offer to wrap presents for an overwhelmed neighbor, help an elderly friend with grocery shopping or give a stressed parent a brief childcare break. Sometimes, the most valuable gift is your presence.

December 27

Bridge to the New Year

As the holiday whirlwind settles, take this week to consider one way you can weave giving into your routine for 2025. Could you commit to monthly food bank visits? Or set up a recurring micro-donation for a local cause? Turn the spirit of December into a year-round symphony of support.

December Is Wrapping Up 2024 with the Gift of Giving Back Month

As we embrace the holiday festivities, it is important to remember the true meaning of the season — giving. Focus on these realistic, low-stress ways to give to others and watch as holiday cheer unfolds in meaningful ways.



1. Hand a \$5 gift card with a genuine “thank you” to a mail carrier, store clerk or someone working hard.



2. Locate good-condition items in your home to donate to someone in need.



3. Give the gift of time by being present for a stressed family member or an elderly neighbor.



4. Visit a food bank or donate to a local cause.