

# HDHeartbeat

A Health Designs Newsletter



## The Power of Gratitude in the Workplace

While Thanksgiving is typically a holiday to express our thanks, we should all incorporate a daily gratitude practice due to its many benefits for our health and well-being.

Those who practice gratitude report higher satisfaction with life, strong social relationships, and higher self-esteem, reducing symptoms related to depression.

Gratitude can also relieve anxiety by pulling us out of our negative thought patterns and focus on the present moment.

Gratitude can help improve heart health by improving our sleep, diet, exercise patterns, and stress levels.

Small moments of gratitude can manage our stress by influencing the pathways of our parasympathetic nervous system, which controls our digestion and rest.

Gratitude can help improve our sleep especially if we think of positive, grateful thoughts before falling asleep.

Productivity can be boosted by gratitude as well. Adopting a more positive and grateful mindset can motivate us to create and achieve attainable goals, boosting confidence and overall productivity whether it be in our personal or professional lives.

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## Practicing Mindfulness Through Eating Habits

Mindfulness is the intentional practice of paying attention to the present moment without judgement. It can be applied to virtually anything from mindful meditation to mindful movement and to, yes, mindful eating.

What is mindful eating? Mindful eating is the act of focusing all your physical and emotional senses to experience the food you enjoy or make without judgment. A few steps are involved in practicing mindful eating:

1. Honor your food by acknowledging who prepared the meal.
2. Engage all your senses by noting the sounds, smells, colors, tastes, and textures of the food.

3. Serve in modest portions to avoid food waste are overeating. Try eating no more than what can fit on a 9 inch plate.

4. Savor small bites and chew thoroughly to truly experience the food's flavors.

5. Eat slowly to avoid overeating.

6. Don't skip meals as going too long without eating can increase strong hunger cues and the likelihood of poor food choices.

7. Incorporate more of a plant-based diet to boost your overall health and the health of the planet. This is not to say cut out animal protein altogether but to simply add more fruits, vegetables, and plant-based proteins like beans to your overall diet.



## Pumpkin Whipped Feta Dip

- 8 oz block of feta cheese, drained from brine
- ¼ c plain greek yogurt
- 1 C canned pumpkin puree
- 1-2 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- Black pepper
- Chopped walnuts
- Toasted bread or crackers



1. Whip feta by combining feta cheese and greek yogurt in food processor. Blend into smooth.
2. Add pumpkin puree, honey, thyme, and black pepper to mixture. Blend again until ingredients are combined.
3. Transfer whipped feta to fridge and chill, covered, for 30-60 minutes. When ready to serve, transfer to large bowl and garnish with chopped walnuts, fresh thyme, and an extra drizzle of honey, if desired.
4. Serve with crunchy or toasted bread or crackers for dipping.

## HD MONTHLY CHALLENGE

How will you stay healthy this holiday season? There is no better time than now to invest in yourself and we invite you to start that new health goal now as opposed to the new year!

## Healthy for the Holidays: How can we Manage our Healthy Habits During a Busy Holiday Season?

With the holidays right around the corner, healthy habits sometimes fall the farthest from our minds. But we'll let you in on a little secret: your healthy habits and happy holidays can coexist, peacefully. Here are some tips to manage healthy habits during the busy holiday season:

- There is no better time than now to pick up a healthy habit. Instead of a restrictive goal pick something that asks you to do more of something. For example, your goal could be to move more throughout the day or eat more servings of fresh fruits or vegetables.
- Our bodies were designed to move and could use exercise snacks throughout the day.
- Practice portion control. You don't have to cut out your favorite side dishes at those family holiday dinners. Take a smaller portion of your favorite dish and fill up with more nutrient-dense foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Plan activities that are not centered around food. There's more to the holiday season than those tasty treats. Organize a group to go outside and look at the neighborhood light displays, volunteer in your community, or try a seasonal activity such as skiing or ice skating (depending on where you live).
- Plan ahead. Know your limits when it comes to social gatherings and holiday spending!

### WHEN THE LEAVES LET GO: A SEASON FOR REFLECTION AND RENEWAL

In this month's blog we discussed cultivating a growth mindset as the leaves change. The Autumn season sparks renewal, Psychologists refer to this as the “fresh start effect”, where these natural turning points help us separate from the past and approach our goals with renewed enthusiasm.



Blog

