

## Thankfulness: How Gratitude Can Help Your Health

Gratitude is more than a buzzword. It's a habit and practice that may change your perception of well-being.

Research has shown that the practice of gratitude is associated with many positive effects in a person's physical and mental health. Expressing gratitude can improve sleep, mood and immunity, and can decrease depression, anxiety, chronic pain and disease.

Being grateful is the gift that keeps on giving. And it's the perfect time of year to start practicing gratitude. Here are five simple prompts to get started. Write these down before you go to bed or share them around your Thanksgiving table. In five minutes, you can practice gratitude from the heart.



### 1 What did your body do for you today?

You take about 8 million breaths per year, 15-16 breaths per minute. Your feet can take you up a mountain; your arms can hold someone you love. Take a minute to marvel at the finely tuned machinery of your body and thank yourself for the steps you take every day to keep it safe and healthy.

### 2 What did you feed your body to nourish yourself today?

Was it an old favorite, something you made or something new and different? If you eat three meals a day, you'll eat about a thousand meals this year. Take a minute to savor an especially delicious meal. And check out some healthy options on [heart.org](https://www.heart.org).

### 3 What did you enjoy doing today?

Did you give it your all when exercising today, or find a quiet moment while sitting in traffic to reflect? Take a minute to think back on one particularly enjoyable moment.

### 4 With whom do you look forward to connecting?

Is it someone who sets your heart on fire, always has a smile for you, has your back or makes you laugh until you cry? Take a minute to smile as you think about this special person. Then plan to get together or talk with them soon.

### 5 What are you doing right now?

Every single day you wake up with 24 brand new hours. The past is history, the future is a mystery and today is a gift — that's why it's called the present! Take a minute to be thankful for the gift of time, including any extra time you have right now for your family or yourself.

# A Taste of the Season

## Creamy Spinach Feta Dip

Serve this heart-healthy take on spinach dip at your next holiday gathering – it's as festive as it is flavorful!



Servings: 6 | Serving Size: 1/4 cup



Calories  
64 Per Serving



Protein  
6g Per Serving



Fiber  
2g Per Serving

## Ingredients

- 10.5 ounces frozen, chopped, packaged spinach
- 1/2 cup fat-free, plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1/2 cup fat-free feta cheese (crumbled)
- 1 teaspoon garlic (minced, from jar)
- 1/3 cup fresh, chopped parsley or dill OR 2 teaspoons dried parsley or dill
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 6 whole-wheat pitas (quartered)

## Directions

1. Cook the spinach according to the package directions. Drain well, pressing down with a fork to remove as much liquid as possible.
2. In a medium bowl, stir together the spinach and all the remaining ingredients except the pita. Refrigerate for 1 hour. Serve with the pita.

# November is Eat Smart Month!

All month long we're highlighting small, sustainable changes to improve overall health, especially during the holiday season when it can be challenging to maintain healthy eating habits. But healthy eating doesn't mean saying no to dessert! **Round out your holiday table with heartwarming desserts. Don't miss the heart-healthy cookbook offer on page 7 and receive your free copy!**





## For Those Who Believe in Leaving the World Better Than They Found It: Integrating Charitable Giving and Estate Planning

By Andrew Jenkins

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As Thanksgiving approaches, many of us pause to give thanks for family, friends, and the traditions that bring meaning to our lives. It's also a reminder to protect your future and your loved ones through thoughtful planning. Right on the heels of Thanksgiving comes Giving Tuesday on December 2, a global day dedicated to generosity and making a difference. For individuals who believe in leaving the world better than they found it, this season is a powerful opportunity to align charitable giving with estate planning.

Thoughtful charitable planning—whether through a will, trust, or other giving strategy—can be a powerful way to plan a secure future while simultaneously aligning your resources with your purpose. Whether you're thinking about establishing your legacy for the first time or have supported impactful causes for years, choosing to incorporate philanthropy into your estate planning allows you to shape the world for generations to come.

### Giving With Purpose

Charitable estate planning isn't just about giving—it's about giving with intention. It starts with asking yourself:

- What impact do I want to have on the world?
- How can I make a difference after I'm gone?

For many, philanthropy is deeply personal. It may be a way to honor a loved one, celebrate resilience, or ensure future generations benefit from causes that matter most. Once your goals are clear, there are many ways to turn your vision into lasting impact. By incorporating charitable giving into your estate plan—whether through a will, trust, or beneficiary designation—you can extend your values far beyond your lifetime and create a brighter future for all.

### Charitable Bequest

A charitable bequest through your will or revocable trust is an easy and flexible way to make an impact for generations to come. Your will or trust gives you peace of mind knowing your loved ones are taken care of, your assets are distributed accurately, and your gift reflects your personal values.

### Charitable Trusts

For those looking to make a meaningful impact while meeting personal financial goals, charitable trusts offer a smart and flexible way to give. Two of the most effective options are:

- **Charitable Remainder Trusts (CRT):** Provides income for you or loved ones for life or a set term, with the remaining assets going to charity.
- **Charitable Lead Trusts (CLT):** Makes regular gifts to charity for a set number of years, then transfers the remaining assets to your heirs—often with significant tax advantages.

Both options offer a thoughtful balance of generosity and financial planning, allowing you to support the missions you care about, create your legacy and provide for loved ones all at the same time.

## **Beneficiary Designations**

Planning for your future includes determining the distribution of your assets. A beneficiary designation is a legal form available for many financial accounts that allows you to specify who should receive the remaining funds after your passing. When you use a beneficiary designation, you simplify the estate planning and administration process while creating a lasting legacy.

## **Donor Advised Funds: Flexibility for Your Giving**

A donor advised fund (DAF) offers a simple, tax-efficient way to support the causes you care about—on a timeline that works for you. With a DAF, you can make a charitable contribution now and receive an immediate tax deduction, while recommending grants to organizations like the American Heart Association over time. It's an ideal solution for those who've experienced a high-income year, sold a business, or simply want to be more intentional and strategic with their philanthropy.

You can also create a legacy with your DAF by naming a charity(ies) as a beneficiary(ies) of your fund. By simply completing the beneficiary designation form assigned to your fund, you can name successor advisors to your fund or a specific charity(ies) to receive all or a percentage of the remaining balance. Whether you're looking to give annually, respond to urgent needs, or create a lasting pattern of support, a DAF gives you the flexibility to align your giving with your financial goals and personal values.

## **Private Foundations**

For individuals and families with significant charitable goals, a private foundation offers a meaningful way to create a lasting impact while involving future generations in giving. A private foundation gives you flexibility, control, and a platform to shape a legacy that reflects your values and vision for the world.

As you gather with loved ones this Thanksgiving, take a moment to reflect on your legacy. Protecting your family and aligning your resources with your values is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give. And as Giving Tuesday approaches, consider not just how you can give today, but how your plan can extend that generosity far into the future. Thoughtful estate planning turns gratitude into action, creating a legacy that lives on.

## **Taking the Next Step**

Estate planning with charitable giving in mind doesn't need to feel complicated. With guidance from your financial, tax, or legal advisors, you can design a strategy that is personal, purposeful, and enduring. The American Heart Association's team of charitable estate planning professionals are also available to assist in your plans at any time with no cost or obligation. This season of gratitude is the perfect time to begin. By integrating charitable giving into your estate plan, you not only protect the people you love but also help create a future that reflects your deepest values.

## **About the Author**

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With more than 20 years of experience in financial planning, Andrew has spent his career helping individuals, families, and organizations align their wealth strategies with their deepest values.

*Investment, Insurance, Retirement, Trust and Estate products and services are Not FDIC Insured, are Not Guaranteed by Bank, and May Lose Value.*

*The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not reflect the views or endorsements of the American Heart Association. The Association does not endorse or assume responsibility for any information or opinions presented in this article.*

**Read more estate planning tips and insights from trusted advisors at [heart.org](https://heart.org) >>**

# Health Starts Here

## 10 Key Facts from the New High Blood Pressure Guidelines



Have you gotten your blood pressure checked? High blood pressure happens when the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels is too high – it's also called hypertension. High blood pressure can lead to serious health problems like heart attack and stroke. It can even affect all age groups.

Nearly half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure, and many don't even know they have it. The only way to know is to have your blood pressure checked.

Learn the top 10 takeaways from the new high blood pressure guidelines from the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology and learn what steps you can take to protect your heart and brain health.

- 1** There is stronger proof now that high blood pressure is linked to increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. If you have high blood pressure, lowering it now may help protect your brain health in the future.
- 2** High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke and a number of heart conditions such as coronary artery disease, heart failure and atrial fibrillation (AFib).
- 3** During or after pregnancy, you can develop high blood pressure, including a dangerous condition called preeclampsia. Checking blood pressure before, during and after pregnancy helps you and your health care team stay on top of your health.
- 4** Know your numbers. Normal blood pressure is when:
  - Systolic pressure (top number) is less than 120 and
  - Diastolic pressure (bottom number) is less than 80
- 5** Anyone can develop high blood pressure. People are encouraged to have their blood pressure checked regularly. This includes people in all age groups: children, young adults, adults and older adults.
- 6** To get the best blood pressure reading, sit in a chair with support for your back, both feet flat on the ground, arm extended and supported at heart level, stay quiet and still.
- 7** In addition to lifestyle changes, you may need medication to help control your blood pressure.
- 8** Eating a healthy diet can help lower or prevent high blood pressure.
- 9** For individuals living with excess weight, losing about 5% of body weight can support overall health and help lower or prevent high blood pressure.
- 10** Lean on [Life's Essential 8](#) to learn more about what you can do to improve your heart and brain health.

**Read the full article and see blood pressure categories**

*It's supporters like you who help make research that keeps hearts beating possible.  
We are deeply grateful for your commitment.*

# Stories from the Heart

## A Mother's Influence, A Daughter's Commitment

Carol Simpson's commitment to the American Heart Association was influenced by her mother, Gertrude Caylor Moorhead. Gertrude was an executive secretary for the American Heart Association in Indiana County, Pennsylvania in the 1950s. Gertrude cherished her work and its mission. "She was quite a lady," Carol beamed.

In addition to her mother's connection, a family history of heart disease helped shape Carol's desire to support heart health and medical research, with her maternal uncle and aunt both suffering fatal heart attacks at 67. Gertrude herself survived a heart attack at the same age, though later succumbed to a fatal stroke at age 80.

Carol and her husband John were childhood sweethearts. "He's a charmer!" Carol quipped. Both Carol and John pursued PhD degrees at the University of Minnesota. Carol earned her doctorate in speech and theater while John earned his in economics. Carol's career in Washington, D.C. included public speaking consulting for high profile clients and as a communications professor for 25 years at Georgetown University. As soon as Carol started earning paychecks, she made sure to give back. Her support for the American Heart Association grew steadily over the years.



After a breast cancer diagnosis, Carol retired at the age of 58 but never lost her passion for philanthropy and her zest for travel. The Simpsons cherished watching the vibrant fall colors in northern Arizona, exploring Europe's rich historical landmarks, and even ventured to Antarctica. Whether admiring Venice's opera house, the first in Europe, or cruising along the coast of Norway, their travels filled their retirement years with rich memories and a shared sense of adventure.

As long-standing supporters of the American Heart Association, in 2016 the Simpsons were invited to attend the Association's Scientific Sessions in New Orleans, where their connection to the mission grew even stronger. To ensure her mother's legacy would drive advancements in heart and stroke research, Carol designated that a portion of her estate would flow into the newly named Gertrude Caylor Moorhead Endowment for Scientific Discovery as established by the American Heart Association.

That same year, a change in the law enabled Carol to make tax-efficient charitable contributions directly to charities from her IRA through qualified charitable distributions (QCDs). With John's degree in economics, he understands the tax advantages of making gifts to charities.

Now facing health challenges, including a series of strokes, Carol remains determined to stay active. She regularly visits the gym at her assisted living facility, maintaining mobility to enjoy family and her lively community.

Carol Simpson remains steadfast in her mission to reduce the devastating impact of stroke, supporting medical research with unwavering dedication. Honoring her mother's legacy, she continues to advance the American Heart Association's mission, driving scientific progress and offering hope to countless families affected by heart disease and stroke. As the Simpsons reflect on a life well-lived, they find peace in knowing Carol's commitment to research will endure. John lovingly remarked, "We've done good, Carol."



If Carol wants to give money to the American Heart Association now, the most tax-efficient way is to give through her IRA.

*- John Simpson, Cor Vitae Society | Paul Dudley White Legacy Circle*



# Celebrating YOU on National Philanthropy Day!

National Philanthropy Day is November 15th, and we're celebrating the generosity, compassion and heart of supporters like you. Your support fuels lifesaving research, education and programs that save more lives and help communities thrive.

Because of you, we're able to continue our mission to advance health and hope for everyone, everywhere. Every gift, no matter the size, saves and improves lives. Your commitment to helping others strengthens the heart of our mission. Together, we're creating a future where fewer lives are lost to heart disease and stroke.



2025 Pittsburgh Heart Walk

## A Heartfelt Thanks, with Benefits for You



As the year draws to a close, now is a great time to make a gift that can help save lives and offer valuable tax benefits for you.

There are many ways to make a difference before December 31 — some that may even help you reduce your taxable income this year. Gifts of appreciated stock, donations to your donor advised fund (DAF) for grantmaking, or qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from your IRA can all be tax-smart ways to support the American Heart Association's lifesaving mission.

Your generosity fuels breakthroughs in research, prevention and community health — helping hearts everywhere. However you choose to give, your support makes an incredible impact.

Discuss these tax-smart ways to give with your professional advisors to see what kind of gift best fits your personal goals.

**Plus, explore our online platform that makes donating tax-smart gifts simple and secure >>**

## Claim Your FREE Resources

To help you start or update your plans, let us send you a free copy of *The Heart of Your Legacy: Your Personal Estate Planning Kit*. It includes helpful information about the key components of an estate plan, guiding questions and more than 15 worksheets to help you organize your assets and intentions. We'll also send you a copy of our holiday cookbook, *Just Desserts*. Enjoy heart-healthy desserts to share around your holiday table throughout the season!

**Get Your Guides**

