

## Wellness Articles

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An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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**Proposed publication date:** Mar. 16, 2020

**Content provided by:** Alberta Health Services, [myhealth.alberta.ca](http://myhealth.alberta.ca)

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## Being grateful promotes happiness, a positive outlook

What are you grateful for? Maybe you've got a new car, bought a big-screen TV, or scored a promotion you've been wanting. It feels great—but only for a little while.

It turns out that our set happiness points are 50 per cent predetermined by genetics, 10 per cent by life circumstances and 40 percent by intentional activities and practices. This means that a huge part of what makes us happy is within our power to change.

Gratitude is one easy and well-proven skill that can actually help improve our set happiness point.

Practicing gratitude can help improve our mental health and reduce stress. It can help create a more positive outlook on life, which helps keep us more emotionally balanced. It can also help us pay attention to the good things in life and savour them. It prevents us from taking things for granted, and it helps train us to see more good things in life.

Here are some ways to be grateful:

**Keep a gratitude journal.** Make it a habit to think about positive or good things you are grateful for daily, and write them down.

**Reflect through mindfulness, meditation or relaxation.** Take time to be still and calm and focus on the present moment. List those things you are grateful for—maybe a sunny day, a hot shower, your home, a good friend, or a nice cup of tea.

**Thank someone.** Nurture your meaningful relationships. Send a thank-you card or leave a note to someone you are grateful to have in your life.



**Give back.** Return the kindness that someone has extended to you.

**Practice small gestures.** Sometimes all it takes is a smile, handshake or wave to express your thanks.