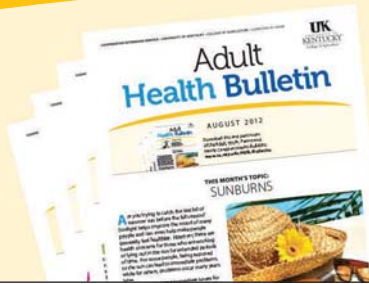


Adult Health Bulletin



DECEMBER 2013

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: CHARITABLE GIVING

Charity is most often thought of as giving to the less fortunate. This time of year, many people practice charitable giving. Did you know that giving can actually be good for you? And the good news is that giving does not have to be purchased gifts. Giving your time through volunteering and donating cash to a charity you would like to support are also considered giving.

Here are 5 ways giving can be good for you:

- 1. Giving makes you feel happy.** In 2008, a study by the Harvard Business School found that giving money to someone else actually made people happier than keeping it for themselves. Even the brain reacts when we are giving. The areas of the brain connected with pleasure, trust and connection with other people light up when a person is giving. Studies have named this feeling, "helper's high."
- 2. Giving is good for your health.** Many studies have found that giving actually is good for you. Health improvements have been seen in those who have



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Charities should spend about 75 percent of donations on programs and 25 percent or less on administrative costs.

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chronic illness, as well as the elderly. People who volunteer may live longer. This is because people who help others have been shown to have lower stress, which is connected to many health problems. Also, people who help others on a regular basis tend to have lower blood pressure.

3. When you give, you connect with other people. Researchers who study the social aspect of human nature have found that when people give to others, they are likely to receive help when needed. This provides trust and cooperation among people and allows people to feel connected to one another.

4. Giving helps make you thankful. Studies have shown that when a person gives regularly, that person is more likely to feel thankful for what they already have. Also, when we express thankfulness for what we have, we feel happier and more connected to other people.

5. When you give, so will others. Did you know that a simple gift does not only help the person who receives, but the community as a whole? When someone receives a gift, studies have shown that they are in turn more likely to give gifts to others. Even if you give a gift and that person then goes on to smile at other people, there is a positive ripple effect.

People who help others have been shown to have lower stress and lower blood pressure.

If you are thinking about giving a charitable gift or volunteering your time, this is a great time of the year to do so. Remember, your gift may make you healthier, your community stronger and spread happiness further than you could ever imagine.



If you cannot decide where to donate consider this:

- **What is the charity's mission?** Do you want to support the efforts of this charity?
- **Is the group a non-profit?** You want to make sure a charity is not taking advantage of your goodwill. Make sure you are donating money to an organization that uses the money you gave as they said they would.
- **How much of the donations are spent on administration?** A well-organized charity should spend about 75 percent of donations on the program itself, and 25 percent or less on administrative costs.

SOURCES:

Charity Navigator: Your Guide to Intelligent Giving <http://www.charitynavigator.org/>
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Health Bulletin

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