

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

# MyHealthTALK

December 2014  
Courtesy of Asset Health



## The Greatest GIFT of All

No matter what holiday you celebrate this season, there is one thing we can all focus on as 2014 comes to a close – and that is...

### Gratitude

Science shows that the daily practice of highlighting aspects of your life for which you are grateful – family, experiences and challenges – can dramatically improve your health and wellbeing. Simply listing five to 10 things you appreciate about your life can spin your attitude around and direct you toward a happier self. How easy is that?



**More Commitment:** Keep a journal and commit to listing three to five new things that you are thankful for each day. Some days it'll be easy, other days it may be a challenge, but those are the days when this exercise pays off. When you have to put some thought into that last item on the list, it makes you reflect on your life and identify something you're thankful for that wasn't already on your mind.

### Replace Tragedies With *Happy Memories*

Everyone has bad days. Part of changing your perspective comes from how you learn to handle the rough spots in life. Next time you find yourself enduring a difficult experience, replace negative thoughts with something for which you are grateful.

**Easiest Method:** Redirect negative thoughts as they pop up. Reframe the situation to see the best possible reasoning or outcome.

**More Commitment:** Extend your positivity outward. When you hear someone sharing their bad day blues, help them to see the bright side of the situation.

"The Benefits of Adding Gratitude to Your Attitude,"  
Sherrie Bourg Carter, psychologytoday.com, Nov. 25, 2013.



And when you improve your health, it is a gift you give yourself and those around you, any time of year! Try these two simple ways you can introduce or amplify gratitude in your life:


### Journal Your *Gratitude*

**Easiest Method:** Take a moment first thing in the morning or before going to bed to list (in your head) a few things that you truly appreciate. Challenge yourself to list at least one new thing each day.

### Gifts That Pay It Forward

Looking for a few different ways to show your loved ones that you are thinking about them this holiday season? Consider purchasing gifts that go beyond the intended recipient and have a positive impact on others along the way. There are several organizations that can help you do this, but here are just a few to get started:


**Presents for Purpose** is an organization that sells all sorts of small accessory-like gifts and allows you to select which charity will benefit from your purchase.

 Visit [presentsforpurpose.com](http://presentsforpurpose.com) to learn more.

**Collaborate With Family or Friends to Make a Donation** to a group, such as Heifer International. You can support sustainable farming with gifts like a heifer (or a cow), a family farm care package and more.

 Visit [heifer.org](http://heifer.org) for more information.

**Better Life Bags** is a Michigan group with the goal of creating custom handbags by local women who could not earn wages otherwise. Looking for a gift with designer taste (you can customize your bag with the fabric you like), wrapped in love?

 Check out [betterlifebags.com](http://betterlifebags.com) for more details.



# PROTECTING THE TOY CHEST

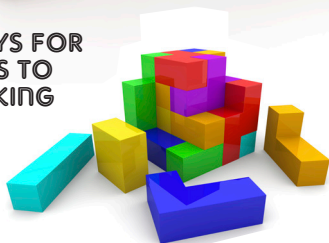
Each year around the holidays, public interest groups release surveys of children's toys heralding safety concerns.

Here are some common playtime hazards to be aware of this season when shopping for small children:



## INSPECT TOYS FOR SMALL PARTS TO AVOID CHOKING HAZARDS

Experts say we shouldn't rely on suggested age restrictions for toys because the label might miss small pieces. There is a handy test for small parts that you can do right at home. If a toy fits in a toilet paper tube, do not give it to a child under the age of 3.



## AVOID NOISY TOYS

If a toy is a little loud for your adult ears, chances are the gadget could be causing damage to your child's ears.

Be sure to test audio toys before purchasing them or talk to a store representative.



Keep updated with recent toy recalls at [safekids.org](http://safekids.org). Report potentially hazardous toys or toy-related injuries to [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov) and [saferproducts.gov](http://saferproducts.gov), or call the CPSC at 1-800-638-2772.

"Trouble in Toyland," Public Interest Research Group in Michigan, Nov. 26, 2013.

"Wound Care: Your Essential First Aid Care Guide," [webmd.com](http://webmd.com), accessed on Nov. 12, 2014.



## AVOID TOXINS IN TOYS

Excess phthalates (found in plastics), arsenic and cadmium can cause a host of health issues in developing children. To learn which toys house these toxins, connect with organizations, such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).



## KEEP MAGNETS AWAY FROM KIDS UNDER 14

If swallowed, magnets pose a huge threat to a child's health. Magnets can get separated in different organs as they're digested and cause pain when they attract.

## PICK TOYS THAT ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE LEAD IN THEM

Cloth toys, unpainted wood toys and books are usually a safe route around products that may contain lead. Lead can affect every organ in the body, but is particularly harmful to developing brains.



## HELLO my name is

The MyHealth Talk newsletter will transition to **Asset Health Talk** starting this January. Be sure to stay tuned for some exciting changes!



## Revamping the Green Bean Casserole

Try this healthy spin on a traditional holiday recipe: the beloved green bean casserole. This recipe is great for vegetarians and omnivores alike; *it's also gluten-free!*

### Ingredients

#### Topping

- ¼ cup almond flour
- ¼ cup parmesan

#### Casserole

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 pound fresh green beans, cut in half with the ends removed
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- ½ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

### Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Prepare the topping by mixing the almond flour with the parmesan.
3. Mix the yogurt with the garlic powder and the cayenne pepper. Then, set it aside.
4. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the chopped onion and cook for four minutes, stirring often, until the onions are golden brown.
5. Add the green beans and cook them, stirring often, for four more minutes, until they are tender. Add the garlic and cook the mix for one more minute. Then, remove your skillet from the heat.
6. Stir in the cheddar cheese until it melts. Then, stir in the seasoned yogurt.

Transfer the ingredients into a baking dish and sprinkle the parmesan-flour mixture on top. Then, bake the casserole for 30 minutes, until the topping is golden. You may want to finish baking the casserole for a few moments under the broiler to give it a nice browned top. *Then, serve and enjoy!*

"Healthy Green Bean Casserole," Vered DeLeeuw, [healthyrecipesblogs.com](http://healthyrecipesblogs.com), accessed on Nov. 10, 2014.