Volunteer! It’s good for your health.

Volunteering can be a great benefit to your community. But did you know those same volunteer activities can also improve your health and well-being?

“There is a calmness that comes with volunteering that can lower blood pressure and lower the heart rate,” says Dr. Susan Corzilius, a family medicine physician with Kaiser Permanente Northwest in Salem, Oregon.

This calmness can also reduce inflammation in the body by lowering stress hormones such as cortisol, she says. “When we lower inflammation, we reduce the risk of many health problems including heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, and depression.”

In addition to the physical health benefits, volunteering can also have a positive impact on mental health, explains Dr. Corzilius, who volunteers monthly at the Salem Free Clinics. “Being interconnected with society and feeling part of a oneness that comes with volunteering can help depression and anxiety.”

When it comes to senior populations, volunteering can help seniors overcome loneliness and isolation, which, in turn, lowers the risk of depression.

With benefits for your mind, body and community, regular volunteering makes sense as part of a healthy lifestyle.

“I’m a big believer in volunteering,” says Dr. Corzilius. “We owe it to ourselves and our community to volunteer.”

So consider signing up to help your favorite local organization. You can search online for volunteer opportunities near you.

Through volunteering, you can help bring positive change to your community — and your own life.

In the Spotlight – Find out what’s happening in your area:

[Northwest](https://thrive.kaiserpermanente.org/care-near-northwest)

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