Health Benefits of Kindness

Numerous scientific studies show that acts of kindness result in significant health benefits, both physical and mental. Here are some key points:

• Helping contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders serious and minor, psychological and physical.

• A rush of euphoria, followed by a longer period of calm, after performing a kind act is often referred to as a “helper’s high,” involving physical sensations and the release of the body’s natural painkillers, the endorphins. This initial rush is then followed by a longer–lasting period of improved emotional well–being.

• Stress–related health problems improve after performing kind acts. Helping reverses feelings of depression, supplies social contact, and decreases feelings of hostility and isolation that can cause stress, overeating, ulcers, etc. A drop in stress may, for some people, decrease the constriction within the lungs that leads to asthma attacks.

• Helping can enhance our feelings of joyfulness, emotional resilience, and vigour, and can reduce the unhealthy sense of isolation.

• A decrease in both the intensity and the awareness of physical pain can occur.

• The incidence of attitudes, such as chronic hostility, that negatively arouse and damage the body is reduced.

• The health benefits and sense of well–being return for hours or even days whenever the helping act is remembered.
• An increased sense of self-worth, greater happiness, and optimism, as well as a decrease in feelings of helplessness and depression, is achieved.

• Once we establish an “affiliative connection” with someone – a relationship of friendship, love, or some sort of positive bonding – we feel emotions that can strengthen the immune system.

• Adopting an altruistic lifestyle is a critical component of mental health.

• The practice of caring for strangers translates to immense immune and healing benefits.

• Regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or faith group attendance is the happiness equivalent of getting a college degree or more than doubling your income.