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Even More Health Things to Be Grateful For

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November 26, 2009

Posted in [Healthcare](#) by [Charlotte Allen](#)



[Charlotte Hays yesterday linked](#) to a lovely editorial in the Seattle Times pointing out that we Americans have the best healthcare system in the world (not that there aren't flaws that ought to be fixed), and that's something we can be thankful for on this uniquely American holiday.

Here's another list of health things to be grateful for today, from [Melinda Beck at the Wall Street Journal](#):

- *Fewer Americans died in traffic fatalities in 2008 than in any year since 1961, and fewer were injured than in any year since 1988, when the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began collecting injury data. One possible reason: Seat-belt use hit a record high of 84% nationally.*
- *Life expectancy in the U.S. reached an all-time high of 77.9 years in 2007, the latest year for which statistics are available, continuing a long upward trend. (That's 75.3 years for men and 80.4 years for women.)*
- *Death rates dropped significantly for eight of the 15 leading causes of death in the U.S., including cancer, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, accidents, diabetes, homicides and pneumonia, from 2006 to 2007. (Of the top 15, only deaths from chronic lower respiratory disease increased significantly.) The overall age-adjusted death rate dropped to a new low of 760.3 deaths per 100,000 people—half of what it was 60 years ago....*
- *Around the world, 27% fewer children died before their fifth birthday in 2007 than in 1990, due to greater use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, better rehydration for diarrhea, and better access to clean water, sanitation and vaccines....*
- *Twenty-seven countries reported a reduction of up to 50% in the number of malaria cases between 1990 and 2006.*

And here's [a study by the Cato Institute's Glen Whitman and Raymond Raad](#) explaining why America leads the world in medical innovation (finder's fee: [Cato's David Boaz](#)).

So, please: Eat all the turkey you want (it's a holiday!), and as you're offering thanks, pray that Congress

won't take our wonderful American system away from us. Happy Thanksgiving!

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