

# Maria Hendricks

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**\$5,000 WINNER**

**Walmart Customer**  
**Mineral, VA**

My family and my grandkids are the most important thing to me. Before the Thrive Challenge, I was neglectful and not present. My husband, Mitchell, was affected by my lack of attention. At work, I had begun to feel frustrated about the things I couldn't control. That affected my mood and the way I viewed others. I had forgotten to be thankful and remember how blessed I am. I needed some encouragement and accountability. I didn't want to feel frustrated at home and at work. I first heard of the Thrive Challenge from my friends Alicia Thomas and Stephanie Corprew at Kaiser Permanente. I saw the changes Alicia had made to her lifestyle — making better food choices and becoming more active with her family — and was inspired to try it myself. I decided to do it to take better care of myself, and because I want to live a happy and longer life for my grandchildren.

## **The first choice I made was to give myself some time for “me.”**

I started setting aside time each morning to stretch, breathe, pray, and be thankful for the day. I would get to work early enough so I could walk for 15 minutes and give myself energy for the day. Now I walk five times a week to hit my goal of 10,000 steps each day. I am eating more salad and fruit, and I love vegetables. I buy my fruits and vegetables twice a week and getting them ready for quick snacks is the best. I'd never eaten cottage cheese before, but now it's my quick choice for breakfast, along with slices of strawberries and blueberries. I made some gluten-free pasta, too — it's great!

## **I was always a water drinker, but now I have a 52oz bottle.**

Now I add freshly squeezed lemon to my water, and it's even better. I pre-squeeze my lemons and refill the jug and keep it in the fridge. When I go to work, I put ice in my jug and keep it at my desk. The Thrive Challenge has made me feel better and not sluggish or irritable. It's improved my digestive health as well.



## **Now I'm more present for Mitchell and enjoy his company.**

We sit outside on our deck looking at the deer in the garden. He sits on his hammock and I get some sun. Just having me around makes Mitchell happy. I have three kids, two grandkids, and one more on the way. I do my rounds of calling them each day. I am more thankful for my husband and my family, and have a more positive outlook. I can't control everything around me, but I have control over my choices. I'm grateful for what we have, and feel blessed — we may not have what others have, but what we have is the best for us.

## **The Thrive Challenge has allowed me to be forgiving to myself and others.**

It's given me a chance to remind myself that I am doing this for me and my family, and to be at peace with my best. It's a chance to make better choices, one day at a time.



THRIVE