



BE HEALTHY.

L FOR LIFE.™

Ha, Ha, Ha! Lighten up, laugh a lot and live healthy

Laughing doesn't just feel good, it is good for you! Many studies have shown that laughter promotes healing from within. The BBC reported on March 7, 2005 that researchers from the University of Maryland, School of Medicine in Baltimore compared the effects of watching funny and stressful films to blood vessel activity. While no difference was seen in blood vessel dilation between the two groups before they watched the films, watching a stressful film clip caused blood flow to slow by around 35%, but laughing during a funny film clip increased it by around 22%.

The researchers suggested laughter caused the tissue that forms the inner lining of blood vessels, the endothelium, to expand in order to increase blood flow. The endothelium is known to have a powerful effect on blood vessel tone and regulates blood flow, adjusts coagulation and blood thickening, and secretes chemicals and other substances in response to wounds, infections or irritation. Impairment of the function of the lining of blood vessels is an early sign of cardiovascular problems. This lining, like every other part of the body, is controlled by the nervous system.

In a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in October 2000, a researcher from Ohio State University linked a person's happiness to the state of his/her heart. This was a large-scale study covering ten years which demonstrated that clinically depressed men were more than twice as likely to die of a heart attack as those who were not depressed.

Laughter promotes healing in non-cardiovascular ailments too. On February 14, 2001, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported research findings

from the Unitika Central Hospital in Japan in which skin welts shrank in allergy patients who watched Charlie Chaplin's comedy "Modern Times," but not in patients who watched a video on weather instead.

On February 21, 2002, the BBC reported findings from a study called Rx Laughter, a collaboration between the US entertainment, pediatrics and psychiatry fields, which validated the UK practice of using laughter in children's hospital wards. The researchers, led by Dr Margaret Stuber, asked children to put their hand into cold water and found the whole group tolerated the temperature longer while watching a funny video.

Those who laughed the most remembered less of the pain, and hormone tests on their saliva provided evidence that their stress levels were lower after laughing. The researchers believe the healing power of humor can reduce pain and stimulate immune function in children with serious diseases such as cancer, AIDS or diabetes and in children receiving organ transplants and bone marrow treatments. Dr. Stuber said, "In some instances laughter may even reduce the amount of anesthesia necessary."

Laughter is an important part of lifetime wellness. Families who participate in wellness chiropractic care enjoy an enhanced sense of well being and health as compared to people who focus solely on crisis care or pain management. Their bodies function at a higher level, they are more resistive to stress, and they are able to enjoy their health. Practicing lifetime wellness of your mind, body and spirit will enable you to fully appreciate the joy and humor in life. Not only is laughing one of the healthiest things you can do, it is also one of the easiest! So go ahead and giggle til you wiggle!

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