

HEALTH FACTS

1. Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services 2004

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A CHUCKLE A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY: THERAPEUTIC HUMOR AND LAUGHTER

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There are several beneficial efforts attributed to humor and laughter, including improved immune function, increased pain tolerance, and decreased stress response. Humor therapy, laughter therapy, laughter meditation, and laughter clubs all have unique implications as group programs and as self-management techniques.

2. Humor therapy could one day be a part of preventive care. A good giggle helps you:

Scorch calories - Laughing for 10 to 15 minutes increases your heart rate by 10% to 20%, which means you can burn an extra 10 to 40 calories a day. Over a year, that can add up to a four-pound weight loss.

Ease pain - In a UCLA study funded by Rx Laughter, a group that promotes research on the connection between humor and health, experts discovered that children tolerated pain better than usual when watching a funny program or video.

Stay healthy - Humor increases the production and effectiveness of natural killer cells that stomp out germs. These cells are elevated for at least 12 hours after just an hour of watching...Will Ferrell....

Tyranski, Kathryn M., "The Comedy Cure," READER'S DIGEST, September 2007, p. 210.

3. Stanford University psychiatrist Allan L. Reiss, MD, recruited 20 male and female college students. Inside an MRI, the men and women looked at 70 cartoons flashed on a small overhead screen and rated them on a funniness scale. When the results came back, Reiss made an unexpected discovery: Men and women process funny differently. The analytical region of women's brains was more active than the men's, suggesting women studied the cartoons more. When they found the cartoon amusing, the reward region of

their brains lit up noticeably more than the guys.

All of which is a fancy way of saying women appear to think a little more about whether they find something humorous. They don't necessarily expect to laugh, and so they enjoy it a lot more when the joke works for them. With men, apparently, it was more like, Hey ...cartoon. Must be funny. Funny is good.

Colligan, Doug. "Why Men and Women Laugh Out Loud" READER'S DIGEST Sept. 2007, p. 99.

4. Humor has been shown to boost brain-power and improve immune-cell function (which can help ward off cancer). Not only that, but a positive attitude means you're more likely to do healthy things like walk, eat cruciferous vegetables and avoid saturated fats--three choices that substantially help the chance of survival after a heart attack, stroke or cancer. So instead of feeling blue, take charge of your life.

"Health IQ" READER'S DIGEST Sept. 2007, p. 63.