

# Laughter Is Good Medicine



Can you really laugh your way to better health? The Mayo Clinic continues to accumulate data indicating the positive benefits we gain from laughter. The effects cause physical changes in the body while lighting the load from a mental perspective. Though laughing is not a cure for the many chronic diseases prevalent in our society, it can lead to a positive attitude that makes dealing with them easier.

Listed below are various ways your body can benefit from laughter:

### *Short term benefits*

~ **Stimulates your organs.** Laughter improves the intake of oxygen, stimulates the heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the release of endorphins, brain chemicals associated with pain relief and euphoria.

~ **Activates and relieves your stress response.** Laughter generates a momentary increase in heart rate and blood pressure followed by a good, relaxed feeling.

~ **Soothes tension and stomachaches.** Laughter can make digestion easier and increase circulation, reducing the physical symptoms of stress.

### *Long term effects*

~ **Improves your immune system.** Positive thoughts associated with laughter can help boost your body's defenses.

~ **Relieves your pain.** Laughter causes the body to produce its own natural painkillers.

~ **Increases personal satisfaction.** Laughter can help you cope with life's difficult situations.

## Put Laughter Into Your Day

~ **Surround yourself with humor.** Collect a few joke books, comic books, or other material that make you laugh. Keep them around the home, office, or other locations such as in the car and pull them out for a chuckle.

~ **It's ok to laugh at yourself.** Find a way to laugh at your own situations and mistakes. You will find that stress begins to fade away.

~ **Practice positive thinking.** Surround yourself with positive people and look for the positive in every situation.

~ **Share humor.** Be prepared with humorous stories or jokes that are appropriate to share with friends, co-workers, or relatives.

~ **Know good humor from bad humor.** Don't laugh at the expense of others.

Check your sense of humor, Do you need to smile a little more, chuckle a little more, or just have a good hearty belly laugh? What are you waiting for? Just laugh out loud now...people will wonder what you are laughing at! Remember, laughter is good medicine.

**MISSISSIPPI STATE**  
UNIVERSITY<sup>™</sup>  
**EXTENSION SERVICE**

Source: "Stress Relief from Laughter, Yes, No Joke",  
[www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-reliefsr00034](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress-reliefsr00034)

This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Award No. 2004-46100-03006. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

*Discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or group affiliation is a violation of federal and state law and MSU policy and will not be tolerated.*