

# Laughter is the Best Medicine

You may even laugh at the idea. Well good, you're on the right path to good health. You have heard the statement time and time again, 'Laughter is the best medicine'. But have you ever wonder about how true this statement really is? Are there really health benefits to laughing?

1. Laughter relaxes the whole body. A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension and stress, leaving your muscles relaxed for up to 45 minutes after. Laughter provides a physical and emotional release. 2. Laughter gives you an internal workout: A good, hearty laugh exercises the diaphragm, contracts the abs and even works out the shoulders, leaving muscles more relaxed afterward. 3. Laughter boosts the immune system. Laughter decreases the levels of stress hormones, like cortisol, epinephrine (adrenaline), dopamine and growth hormone, and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to diseases. Laughter increases the number of antibody-producing cells and enhances the effectiveness of T cells. All this means a stronger immune system, as well as fewer physical effects of stress. 4. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Studies have shown that laughter releases endorphins, natural pain killers, and serotonin. Together these three make us feel good. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain. Endorphins are the same group of hormones responsible for the runners high you hear so much about. If you don't have time to get to the gym for a hard run, try adding a bit of laughter to boost these natural, stress-relieving hormones. Say no to ineffective and harmful drugs. Laughter is a natural drug. 5. Laughter protects the heart. Laughter provides a good workout for the heart. Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect you against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems. So instead of complaining about life's frustrations, try to laugh about them. With this attitude, you may also find yourself being more lighthearted and silly, giving yourself and those around you more to laugh about. Approach life in a more jovial way and you'll find you're less stressed about negative events, and you'll achieve the health benefits of laughter. Sources: <http://stress.about.com/od/stresshealth/a/laughter.htm> [http://www.helpguide.org/life/humor\\_laughter\\_health.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/humor_laughter_health.htm)