

Wellness Benefits of Laughter

Steve Durkac

www.stevedurkac.com

In my presentations I like to share one of my favorite findings by Dr. Lee Berk of Loma Linda University, who released the results of a twenty year study that found first time heart attack victims who were prescribed a similar diet and drug regiment, with the exception that half of the group added a daily 20 to 30 minute period of laughter.

Half were told to watch a funny sitcom on television, a comedy, or to spend the time reading a humorous joke book, as long as the 30 minute period was focused on humor and being able to laugh.

Of the group who were prescribed laughter, only 8% suffered a second heart attack. While the group who were not prescribed daily laughter had a 42% recurrence rate of a second heart attack!

On a CNN medical report television program, Dr. Lee Berk said it best when he commented that had he invented a pill that got these remarkable results, he would be on his way to Stockholm, Sweden for the Noble Peace Prize in Medicine.

While laughter offers no guarantees as the ultimate cure-all, we do know that the medical and psychological benefits of laughter have been cited in the top medical research journals. Here is my top 10 list of such benefits that have been mentioned in these journals:

1. **Reducing cortisol**, a stress hormone that locks up metabolism and hordes fat. (*American Journal of the Medical Sciences*)
2. **Increases endorphins**, the body's opiate feel-good hormone. (*American Journal of the Medical Sciences*)
3. **Eases muscle tension**, good for rheumatism. (*Southern Medical Journal*)
4. **Increases the body's T-Cell count**, immune system cells that kill bacteria. (*Journal of Clinical Research*)
5. **Increases the body's Lymphocyte Blastogenesis**, helps the immune system work faster. (*Journal of the American Medical Association*)
6. **Improves respiratory** conditions, aids in ventilation and helps clear mucus plugs. (*Journal of the American Medical Association*)
7. **Increases blood** circulation and rise in **oxygen** and nutrient levels. (*Journal of Biological Psychology*)
8. **Improves blood** vessel functions and **circulation**. (*University of Maryland*)
9. **Increases catecholamines**, which boost mental alertness and responsiveness. (*Journal of the American Medical Association*)
10. **Reduces the rate of cellular decay**. (*Journal of the American Medical Association*)