

Laughter - No Prescription Needed

By Adam Volluz, Diagnostic Imaging Manager

Stress can be harmful to your health. Studies show that whether it is short-term stress like a traffic jam, or a life changing event like job loss, psychological stress can negatively affect your health. Up to 70% of doctors visits and 80% of serious illness can be worsened by or even linked to stress.

According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter has the ability to:

- Stimulate your organs. Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.
- Activate and relieve your stress response. A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response and increases your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
- Soothe tension. Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle

relaxation, both of which help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

- Improve your immune system. Positive thoughts and laughter actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- Relieve pain. Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.
- Increase personal satisfaction. Laughter can make it easier to cope with difficult situations.
- Improve your mood. Many people experience depression, sometimes due to chronic illnesses. Laughter can help lessen your depression and anxiety and make you feel happier.

April is National Humor Month. So this spring, laugh yourself into better health.

Prior Hospital Happenings available at <http://www.fcphd.org/news.html>

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