Laughter – The Best Medicine

What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity

Laughter is the best medicine. When you are low and perhaps feeling sorry for yourself, find something funny to laugh at. You can't feel really bad and laugh at the same time. But laughter makes you feel good and it is contagious. When things are a bit sour between friends, the better way to set things right is to have a good laugh together. We may not feel like laughing because we have too many things upsetting us and we may feel horrible. This is a condition with which we have to deal with.

Effects of Laughter

- Laughing removes stress hormones, and boosts immune function by raising levels of T-cells, disease-fighting proteins called Gamma-interferon, and B-cells, which produce disease-destroying antibodies.

- Laughter also triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, and produces a general sense of well - being.

- Laughter engages various parts of the brain. Humour pulls the various parts of the brain together rather than activating a component in only one area. A dose of lengthy laughter can be followed by a burst of creativity and group problem solving.

- Laughter is also a good cardiovascular workout. It increases the activity of the heart and stimulates circulation. In addition, after the laughter subsides, the cardiovascular system goes into a state of relaxation.

Exercise is good for the body and mind and Laughing is equivalent to an exercise. Our bodies use muscles and controlled breathing when we laugh. The following are specific ways in which laughter benefits the body:

Muscle Relaxation: A belly laugh causes muscles to relax and be free of tension. As we laugh, muscles that do not participate in the belly laugh relax. After we finish laughing, the muscles involved have their turn at relaxing.

Reduces Stress Hormones: Laughter reduces at least four neuroendocrine hormones associated with stress response: epinephrine, cortisol, dopac, and growth hormone.

Pain Reduction: Humour allows a person to temporarily '*forget*' about aches and pains from disability, injury, or surgery and also enhances immune system.

Cardiac Exercise: A belly laugh is equivalent to '*an internal jogging.*' Laughter provides good cardiac conditioning especially for those unable to perform physical exercises!

Blood Pressure: Laughter lowers blood pressure although women appear to benefit more than men from this exercise.

Respiratory Cleansing: Frequent belly laughter has a cleansing effect because it empties our lungs of more air than it takes in - similar to deep breathing. This is extremely beneficial for patient's who are suffering from respiratory problems.

The voluntary path to cheerfulness is to sit up cheerfully and to act and speak as if cheerfulness were already there. **William James**

Laugh Away

Doctor : you need new glasses.
Patient: How do you know?
I haven't told you what is wrong with me yet.
Doctor : I could tell as soon as you walked in through the window