

# Hints from the Heart



## Laughter is the Best Medicine!

Humor is infectious. The sound of roaring laughter is far more contagious than any cough, snuffle, or sneeze. When laughter is shared, it binds people together and increases happiness and intimacy. In addition to the domino effect of joy and amusement, laughter also triggers healthy physical changes in the body. Humor and laughter strengthen your immune system, boost your energy, diminish pain, and protect you from the damaging effects of stress. Best of all, this priceless medicine is fun, free, and easy to use.

Here are some important things to know:

- **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 boosts the immune system.** Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection-fighting antibodies, thus improving your resistance to disease.
- **Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals.** Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.
- **Laughter protects 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.



Here are some ways to start:

• Creating opportunities to laugh.	• Host game night with friends.
• Watch a funny movie or TV show.	• Play with a pet.
• Go to a comedy club.	• Goof around with children.
• Read the funny pages.	• Do something silly.
• Seek out funny people.	• Fun activities: bowling, golfing, karaoke.
• Share a good joke or a funny story.	• Check out your bookstore's humor section.

As laughter, humor, and play become an integrated part of your life, your creativity will flourish and new discoveries for playing with friends, coworkers, acquaintances, and loved ones will occur to you daily. Humor takes you to a higher place where you can view the world from a more relaxed, positive, creative, joyful, and balanced perspective. For more information about the benefits of laughter, go to [www.HelpGuide.org](http://www.HelpGuide.org).

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