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Laughing and telling jokes with friends is not just fun, it is good for your brain health.

You've probably heard the old saying that you should laugh more because laughter is the best medicine. Laughing is a good remedy for many things in life–we all need humor and levity to combat daily stresses. Laughing is not only a great release; it is available to everyone, anywhere, anytime.

If you've wondered if laughter is good for your health, you're not alone. Can laughter really have hidden benefits other than simply being an automatic emotional response to seeing or hearing something funny?

University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) researchers say yes. They studied people who laugh every day, several times a day to see if there was a connection between laughter and health benefits.

What they found was that on a biological level laughing introduces additional oxygen into the body. Lymph fluids are circulated and increased levels of oxygen boost immune system function. Laughing, in a sense, 'pumps' oxygen through vital organs and tissues, which need the oxygen to repair damage, fight infection and keep you feeling healthy.

People who laugh on a consistent basis tend to have lower blood pressure than those who laugh occasionally. Many studies have looked at the benefits of laughing and the heart. The UMMC was the first research university to find a link between laughter and lowering heart disease. They found people with heart disease laughed, on average, 40 percent less than people of the same age without heart disease.

Born to Laugh

Humans have a natural instinct for laughter. Babies usually begin to laugh at four months. It appears that laughter may be one of the few universal traits found across human cultures. Laughter is a universal language that humans share.

We know that adults are far less likely to laugh than children. In fact, the average child laughs over 300 times a day, while the typical adult only laughs 17 times a day. Even worse is the fact that a majority of adults who report laughing on a daily basis fall into the age range of 18 to 34.

Humor and laughter may also have powerful effects on memory, brain health and aging. If the mental effects of laughter are as positive as the physical, then it is time to learn a few new jokes, gather some friends and start improving your brain health the easy way. Make them laugh. Polish those punch lines and improve your brain health.

Laughter is a Universal Language

If you are an adult that doesn't laugh enough, then it's time to start laughing and help your body feel better while having some fun. According to a Stanford researcher, laughing is like jogging while standing in place. Laughing is actually a physical workout. Remember the last time your stomach hurt from laughing too much. You did a whole abdominal workout that was more fun than crunches and sit-ups any day. One minute of laughter is equal to using a rowing machine for ten minutes.

Use these tips to add more laughter in your life:

- Find humor in everyday things.
- Be a child again–find amusement in the most ordinary things.
- Increase your exposure to comedy such as funny books, movies, and live theater.

- Take time each day to laugh.
- If you hear a joke that makes you laugh, remember it, chances are it will make someone else laugh too!