



This week...

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Did you know that laughter **releases endorphins**: natural chemicals in the body that promote a sense of well-being, relieve stress and temporarily reduce pain? **No wonder** laughter makes us feel good! Even better, positive feeling remains even *after* the laughter subsides.

Short-term Benefits of Laughter

- **Laughter reduces stress.** When we laugh and smile, cortisol levels decrease. Cortisol is also known as the stress hormone, so lower levels are better for our mental health. Therefore, laughter increases our stress resilience.
- **Laughter relaxes and revitalizes.** Along with reducing stress, laughter also increases our energy levels. Therefore, we can stay focused more easily.
- **Laughter relaxes our body.** A good, hearty laugh relieves physical tension, 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 stimulates many organs.** Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs circulation, and muscles, which increases the endorphins released from your brain.
- **Laughter protects the heart.** Laughter improves the function of blood vessels and increases blood flow, which can help protect against a heart attack and other cardiovascular problems.
- **Laughter burns calories.** It's no replacement for going to the gym, but one study found that laughing for 10 to 15 minutes a day can burn approximately 40

calories — which could be enough to lose three or four pounds over the course of a year.

- **Laughter eases distressing emotions.** Laughter counteracts feelings of anxiety and sadness. Moreover, it helps us release other intense emotions, such as grief.
- **Laughter lightens anger's heavy load.** Nothing diffuses anger and conflict faster than a shared laugh. Looking at the funny side can put problems into perspective and enable you to move on from confrontations without holding onto bitterness or resentment.

Long-term Benefits of Laughter

- **Laughter improves your immune system.** Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. By contrast, positive thoughts can actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more serious illnesses.
- **Laughter increases personal satisfaction.** Laughter can make it easier to cope with difficult situations. It also helps you connect with other people.
- **Laughter improves your mood.** Many people experience depression, sometimes due to chronic illnesses. Laughter can help lessen your depression and anxiety and may make you feel happier.
- **Laughter can contribute to a longer life span.** A study in Norway found that people with a strong sense of humour outlived those who don't laugh as much. The difference was particularly notable for those battling cancer.

For your **ReFresh** break today, take 5 to 10 minutes to laugh! Here are some videos that will make you laugh out loud, as well as some jokes to share with your students or colleagues:

- [Nursery Rhymes Are Absolutely Ridiculous](#) – Mike Godwin
- [A Tale of Two Brains](#) (*funny and educational!!*)
- www.ducksters.com/jokes/school.php
- www.squiglyplayhouse.com/JokesAndRiddles/School.php
- www.rd.com/jokes/school-jokes

If you would like to contribute, or have ideas about what you would like to see in the **ReFresh** series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.

Sources:

1. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm>
2. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>
3. <https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/laughter-good-for-you>