Laughter – It Really May be the Best Medicine!
Recent studies have shown that indulging your sense of humor can help you live a longer, healthier life. Laughing not only eases stress, promotes social bonding, and lowers blood pressure, but it may also boost your immune system. A good sense of humor becomes more important for people as they age, and it’s associated with a more satisfying life, according to a new Swiss study. Here are some of the many benefits that laughter can bring into our lives:

1. **You’ll Breathe Easier**
   Laughing involves deep inhalations. When you exhale, your heart rate and blood pressure both go down and you enter a calmer state of being. This may explain why we feel a sense of relief after a good laugh.

2. **You’ll Bond with Others**
   Laughter is a social activity, best enjoyed with other people. Laughing together helps keep our relationships fresh and exciting. Sharing laughter with others builds strong and lasting bonds. Most importantly, humor can be a powerful and effective way to heal resentments, disagreements, and hurts. Laughter unites people during tough times.

3. **You’ll Combat Stress**
   Just the anticipation of laughing decreases the stress hormones dopac, cortisol, and epinephrine by 38, 39, and 70 percent, respectively, according to researchers at Loma Linda University in California. And when researchers at the University of Maryland showed short movie clips to study participants, those who watched funny films experienced a 22 percent increase in blood flow to their hearts.

4. **You’ll Stay Healthier**
   Recent studies on the immune system and laughter show that laughter lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, increases muscle flexion and boosts the bodies’ immune functions. As a result of this, levels of infection-fighting T-cells, disease fighting proteins called Gamma-interferon and B-cells rise, which causes an increase in disease destroying antibodies. Laughter also triggers the release of endorphins, the body’s natural pain-killers, and produces a feeling of general well-being.

5. **You’ll Do Better Work**
   Taking 15 minutes each day to introduce fun and laughter into the workplace is not a loss of time; it’s a productivity booster. Laughing helps employees clear the cobwebs from their brains and keeps the creativity juices flowing. Great companies and leaders share these beliefs and leverage the positive power of laughing and healthy humor into their teams on a regular basis. In fact, in a *Men’s Health* survey of nearly 600 men, 73 percent said that having a sense of humor made them better at their jobs.

Food for Thought

- “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”
  - Proverbs 17:22

- “You don’t stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.”
  - Michael Pritchard

- “If we couldn’t laugh we would all go insane.”
  - Jimmy Buffet

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