



# HEALTH CAPSULE | No.55 | 2017

## Laughter is the best medicine

Laughter is a physical manifestation made through vocal inflections to express an emotional response. As a basic form of communication, it allows a genuine expression of your state of being. So keep laughing because it's good for your health and wellbeing! It's good for you and for people around you. Here's a list of reasons why:



Photo: Richard Foster

**Laughter prevents heart disease.** It improves your cardiovascular and respiratory systems and your skeletal muscular health. It increases the heart rate, blood pressure and blood flow. It improves your breathing with deeper and regular breaths and flushes out residual air with more oxygen intakes. It also relaxes muscle tension.

**Laughter boosts your immunity.** It stimulates the levels of antibodies, T cells and immune cells to strengthen your resistance to disease.

**Laughter reduces stress and pain.** Elevated stress affects the immune system. The act of laughing activates a stress response: it lowers stress hormone levels like cortisol and adrenaline while it increases the levels of health-enhancing hormones and natural pain killers like neurotransmitters

called endorphins, giving you a good relaxed feeling.

**Laughter makes you happier.** It lifts your mood as it alleviates depression and anxiety. Positive thoughts help you cope with difficult situations and overcome challenges in your life. Good humor and laughter help you bond with other people and build stronger relationships. Laughing contributes to a restful sleep, encourages creativity and helps with short-term memory and the sense of alertness.

### Ha-ha-have more laughter in your life!

- **Actively seek out humor.** Watch funny movies, TV shows and online video clips, look for comedy books or albums, put funny pictures and greeting cards where you can see them, read comic strips and joke websites, go to a comedy club.
- **Surround yourself with funny people.** Make it your habit to spend time with friends and share funny stories or jokes. You are thirty times more likely to laugh when you are around people.
- **Find ways to laugh at yourself.** Try to develop a positive outlook or find a way to laugh at your own situation.
- **Force yourself to laugh.** A provoked laughter might seem strange at first but is just as efficient as a spontaneous one. Consider laughter yoga to practice in group.
- **Smile.** Laughter is contagious and it starts with a smile. Start smiling and watch the positive effects it has on other people.

Sources: Drs. Asa Don Brown and Eunice Johannson, Helpguide.org, Mayo Clinic, WebMD



## October 10

### World Mental Health Day

#### A few facts

**300 million** people currently live with depression around the world.

**One in five** Canadian will experience a mental health problem in his lifetime.

**49%** of those who feel have suffered from depression or anxiety have never gone to see a doctor about this problem.

**Stigma** associated with mental illness is the main barrier to diagnosis and treatment.



#### How to help

- **Listen.** Be there for someone with mental illness and be receptive when they need to talk about what they are going through. This is a first important step toward recovery.
- **Be kind.** Small acts of kindness make all the difference. Smile or invite them for a coffee.
- **Break the silence.** Acknowledging how we are all affected by mental illness directly or indirectly helps toward eliminating stigma.
- **Educate yourself.** There are many resources available to raise awareness and know more about mental health. Visit [amiquebec.org](http://amiquebec.org), [camh.ca](http://camh.ca) (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) or [douglas.qc.ca](http://douglas.qc.ca) (the Douglas Mental Health University Institute).

Sources: World Health Organization, Canadian Mental Health Association, Bell Let's Talk

## 9 reasons to have plants in the office

1. **Increases** productivity by **15%**;
2. **Decreases** the rate of absenteeism from **5% to 15%**;
3. **Purifies** the air by absorbing CO<sup>2</sup> and other air pollutants from printers and computers;
4. **Reduces noise**;
5. **Reduces** stress, anxiety, depression, hostility, anger and fatigue by 40% to 50%;
6. **Improves** immune and cardiovascular systems;
7. **Strengthens** team work and positive relations;
8. **Increases creativity**;
9. **Spruces up** the work space.

Sources: University of Moncton, David Suzuki Foundation, University of Guelph (George Morris Centre), Fédération interdisciplinaire de l'horticulture ornementale du Québec

