

[IMAGE]

A Laugh a Day Keeps the Stress Away

By Editorial Staff

It's often said laughter is the universal medicine. Certainly a good chuckle can cheer us up when we're feeling blue. Now, researchers have shown that even anticipating a laugh helps reduce stress.

A group of researchers found that anticipating laughter releases two specific hormones: beta-endorphins (the family of chemicals that alleviates depression) and human growth hormone (which helps with immunity). These two hormones increased by 27 percent and 87 percent, respectively, in a group of volunteers who anticipated getting to watch a humorous film. No increase in these hormone levels was seen among volunteers who did not anticipate getting to watch the film.

image - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark In a similar study, the same researchers found there was a significant reduction in three stress hormones: cortisol, epinephrine (adrenaline) and dopac (a brain chemical that helps produce epinephrine). Levels of these hormones decreased by 39 percent, 70 percent and 38 percent, respectively, among those who thought a belly laugh was imminent.

According to Dr. Lee Berk, the study team's lead researcher, "Our findings lead us to believe that by seeking out positive experiences that make us laugh, we can do a lot with our physiology to stay well."

So go ahead and guffaw - it'll do you a world of good!

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