



DOUGLAS COUNTY Healthy Directions Wellness Newsletter

STRESS RELIEF FROM LAUGHTER? YES, NO JOKE!

When it comes to relieving stress, more giggles and guffaws are just what the doctor ordered. Here's why.

Whether you're overcome with giggles during the most hysterical moments of a Monty Python movie or you twitter away at the highbrow humor of a New Yorker cartoon, laughing does you good. Laughter helps you deal with a variety of maladies, including the stresses of daily life.

Stress-relief benefits from a belly laugh

Laughter's health benefits are no joke. A good sense of humor can't cure all ailments, but data are mounting about the positive things laughter can do.

Haikus are easy.

But sometimes they don't make sense.

Refrigerator.

Short-term benefits

A good laugh has great short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it doesn't just lighten your load mentally, it actually induces physical changes in your body. Laughter can:

- Stimulate your organs. Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.
- Activate and relieve your stress response. A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response and increases your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
- Soothe tension and stomachaches. Laughter can also ease digestion and stimulate circulation, which helps reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

I went to a restaurant that serves
"breakfast at any time".
So I ordered
French Toast during the Renaissance.
Steven Wright

What's Inside:

November, 2009

- November is Diabetes Awareness Month
- American Cancer Society Marks 33rd Great American Smokeout
- Helmets Can Help Save Lives
- Preventing the H1N1 Flu and more!

Long-term effects

Laughter isn't just a quick pick-me-up, though. It's also good for you over the long haul. Laughter may:

- Improve your immune system. Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can impact your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. In contrast, positive thoughts actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- Relieve pain. Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.
- Increase personal satisfaction. Laughter can also make difficult situations a little bit easier.

Does this rag smell like
chloroform to you?

Laughter is the best medicine

Go ahead and give it a try. Turn the corners of your mouth up into a smile and then give a laugh, even if it feels a little forced. Once you've had your hearty chuckle, take stock of how you're feeling. Are your muscles a little less tense? Do you feel more relaxed or buoyant? That's the natural wonder of laughing at work. www.Mayoclinic.com

Weather forecast for tonight:
dark.
George Carlin



We want
to know!

What's your favorite funny movie or book?

E-mail the titles to connie.lehman@douglascounty-ne.gov
before November 23rd and we'll print them in the next issue!

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Symptoms

Diabetes symptoms vary somewhat, depending on what type of diabetes you have. If you have prediabetes or gestational diabetes, you may not experience symptoms. Or you might experience some or all of the symptoms of type 1 and type 2 diabetes:

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Extreme hunger
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing sores
- Frequent infections, such as gum or skin infections and vaginal or bladder infections

Although type 1 diabetes can develop at any age, it typically appears during childhood or adolescence. Type 2 diabetes, the most common type, can develop at any age and is often preventable.

When to see a doctor

If you suspect you may have diabetes. If you notice any possible diabetes symptoms, contact your doctor. The earlier the condition is diagnosed, the sooner treatment can begin.

If you've already been diagnosed with diabetes. If you've been diagnosed with diabetes, you'll need close medical follow-up until your blood sugar levels stabilize.

Risk factors for diabetes depend on the type of diabetes.

Risk factors for type 1 diabetes

Although the exact cause of type 1 diabetes is unknown, family history may play a role. Your risk of developing type 1 diabetes increases if you have a parent or sibling who has type 1 diabetes. Other factors have been proposed, as well, such as exposure to a viral illness.

Risk factors for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes

Researchers don't fully understand why some people develop prediabetes and type 2 diabetes and others don't. It's clear that certain factors increase the risk, however, including:

Weight. The more fatty tissue you have, the more resistant your cells become to insulin.

Inactivity. The less active you are, the greater your risk. Physical activity helps you control your weight, uses up glucose as energy and makes your cells more sensitive to insulin.

Family history. Your risk increases if a parent or sibling has type 2 diabetes.

Race. Although it's unclear why, people of certain races — including blacks, Hispanics, American Indians and Asian-Americans — are at higher risk.

Age. Your risk increases as you get older, especially after age 45. Often, that's because you tend to exercise less, lose muscle mass and gain weight as you age. But type 2 diabetes is increasing dramatically among children, adolescents and younger adults.

Gestational diabetes. If you developed gestational diabetes when you were pregnant, your risk of developing prediabetes and type 2 diabetes later increases. If you gave birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds (4 kilograms), you're also at risk of type 2 diabetes.

Polycystic ovary syndrome. For women, having polycystic ovary syndrome — a common condition characterized by irregular menstrual periods, excess hair growth and obesity — increases the risk of diabetes.

Other Conditions Associated With Diabetes Include:

- **High blood pressure**
- **High levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or "bad," cholesterol**
- **Low levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL), or "good," cholesterol**
- **High levels of triglycerides, another fat in the blood.** When these conditions — high blood pressure, high blood sugar and abnormal blood fats — occur together with obesity, they are associated with resistance to insulin.
- **Risk factors for gestational diabetes**
Any pregnant woman can develop gestational diabetes, but some women are at greater risk than are others. Risk factors for gestational diabetes include:
 - **Age.** Women older than age 25 are at increased risk.
 - **Family or personal history.** Your risk increases if you have prediabetes — a precursor to type 2 diabetes — or if a close family member, such as a parent or sibling, has type 2 diabetes. You're also at greater risk if you had gestational diabetes during a previous pregnancy, if you delivered a very large baby or if you had an unexplained stillbirth.
 - **Weight.** Being overweight before pregnancy increases your risk.
 - **Race.** For reasons that aren't clear, women who are black, Hispanic, American Indian or Asian are more likely to develop gestational diabetes.

To learn more about diabetes and access diabetes resources, log on to the American Diabetes Association's website at www.diabetes.org.

FYI During the most recent wellness screenings at the Law Enforcement Center on October 22nd, a total of 19 employees participated.

Congrats for making your health a priority!

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY MARKS 33RD GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT



The Best Time to Quit Smoking is Now

Thursday, November 20, is the 33rd Great American Smokeout, and the American Cancer Society (ACS) continues its legacy of providing free resources to help smokers quit. The Great American Smokeout was inaugurated in 1976 to inspire and encourage smokers to quit for one day. Now, 39.8 percent of the 43.4 million Americans who smoke have attempted to quit for at least one day in the past year, and the Great American Smokeout remains a great opportunity to encourage people to commit to making a long-term plan to quit for good.

With all the resources available to help smokers quit, there has never been a better time to quit smoking, and the ACS is here to help. If you smoke, make a plan and set the Great American Smokeout, November 20, 2008, as your quit date. By calling the **ACS Quitline® at 1-800-227-2345**, people who plan to quit will be able to speak with a trained counselor and receive free, confidential counseling.

Studies have found that Quitline can more than double a person's chances of successfully quitting tobacco. Callers to Quitline can be connected with smoking cessation resources in their communities, social support groups, internet resources, and medication assistance referrals. Since its inception in 2000, Quitline has provided counseling support to more than 380,000 smokers.

ACS offers other free resources – through Quitline and at www.cancer.org/GreatAmericans – that can increase a smoker's chances of quitting successfully, including tips and tools for friends, family, and coworkers of potential quitters to help them be aware and supportive of the struggle to quit smoking. Studies show the importance of social support in quitting smoking, as people are most likely to quit smoking when their friends, family, and coworkers decide to quit smoking. **Popular online social networks such as Facebook and MySpace**

are also becoming support channels for people who want to quit, and ACS Smokeout-related downloadable desktop applications are available on these networks to help people quit or join the fight against tobacco.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. Each year, smoking accounts for an estimated 443,000 premature deaths, including 38,000 deaths among non-smokers as a result of secondhand smoke. Half of all Americans who continue to smoke will die from smoking-related diseases.

Also imperative in this effort to encourage people to quit smoking are smoke-free laws and higher tobacco taxes which make it harder for people to smoke, and protect nonsmokers from tobacco smoke. The majority of U.S. communities are now covered by smoke-free laws, while forty-three states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have raised tobacco taxes since 2000. Smokers nationwide now face an average cost of \$4.32 for one pack of cigarettes, not including all taxes. The rising cost of living is also affecting smokers, as the cost of cigarettes presents an even greater burden. Smoke-free workplace laws and other tobacco control legislation, supported by the Society and its nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM (ACS CAN), help protect Americans from secondhand smoke and encourage smokers to quit.

The ACS is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. **For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.**

Chantix is a non-nicotine prescription medicine specifically developed to help adults 18 and over quit smoking. Our UnitedHealthcare benefits package helps cover the cost of Chantix. To learn more about the drug, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.



When Smokers Quit

20 minutes after quitting: Your heart rate and blood pressure drops.

12 hours after quitting: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting: Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

1 to 9 months after quitting: Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

Benefits of Quitting Over Time

1 year after quitting: The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

5 years after quitting: Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker 5 to 15 years after quitting.

10 years after quitting: The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas decrease.

15 years after quitting: The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

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GET ACTIVE!

WWW.ACTIVATEOMAHA.ORG!



It's a terrific resource for an active life! Click on Calender to see what's going on right here in our area. Here are a few events from the November calendar:

Cranksgiving Bike Race/Ride - November, 14 2009 – 12:00PM
Bike Masters 129th and Fort. It's a race ... of sorts. Each rider gets a list of 10 items that must be purchased, each from a different store. (Where you get them is fine, you just can't get two from the same place.) First one back wins. After the race, when everything is tallied and totaled, all of the food purchased goes to the Omaha Food Bank. It will be held rain or shine, snow or ... well, what's worse than snow? There's no entry fee -- you'll just pay for what you buy (10-15 bucks). There will, however, (hopefully) be prizes. For more info:
<http://cranksgiving-omaha.blogspot.com/2009/09/fill-truck.html>

2009 Platte River State Park Trail Run - November, 21 2009 – 8:00AM (Platte River State Park-Walter Scott Tower) Six or two mile run, entry fees apply. Course: Some park roads but mostly trails and single track trails. Platte River has a few hills in it. Awards: 1st, 2nd, 3rd (male and female) in 6 mile
1st (male and female) in the 2 mile
For more information and to download an entry form:
www.angrycowadventures.com
For more information, contact: Jim at jc40834@windstream.net
402-432-3622

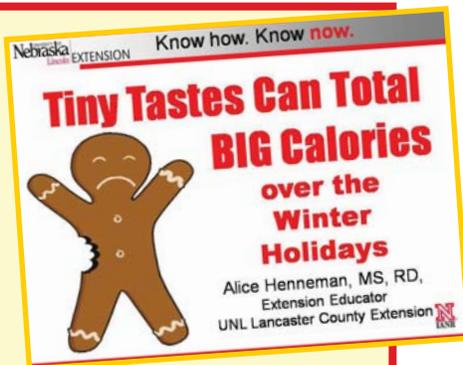
The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all Douglas County employees. EAP's trained staff can help you with problems that affect your personal or professional life. Services are free to employees and family members, and records are kept confidential and are not included in the staff member's personnel file. Call 593-1711 for an appointment.

TINY TASTES CAN TOTAL BIG CALORIES!

The extra calories sometimes sneak up on us over the winter holidays.

They don't always arrive in the form of large portions of calorie-laden food. Rather, they may tiptoe in through many tiny tastes throughout the day.

The UNL Extension in Lancaster County features the fun and informative on-line video "Tiny Tastes Total Big Calories over the Winter Holidays" at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/tiny-tastes.shtml>. You can also download the Powerpoint version to watch again or share with others.



HELMETS CAN SAVE LIVES IN WINTER SPORTS

Skiers and snowboarders who don't wear helmets are more likely to suffer a head injury and lose consciousness than those who do wear helmets, a new U.S. study has found.

The researchers analyzed the medical records of skiers and snowboarders treated at nine hospital emergency departments in Colorado, New York and Vermont between July 2002 and July 2004.

They found that:

- More collisions with fixed objects occurred in the Northeast
- Loss of consciousness was more likely to occur among terrain park users
- Patients in Colorado were less likely to lose consciousness
- Loss of consciousness was less likely among those who wore helmets than among those who did not
- The findings are reported in the fall issue of Wilderness and Environmental Medicine.

The authors noted that traumatic brain injury accounts for 50 to 88 percent of skiing and snowboarding fatalities. They expressed hope that their findings would strengthen the case for the use of helmets in these winter sports.

More information: The American Association of Neurological Surgeons has more about sports-related head injuries.
myuhc.com

Weight Watchers at the Health Center

Weight Watchers began Tuesday, November 3rd at the Health Center and will continue every Tuesday at 11:30 in Town Hall. This is open to anyone. Price is \$12.00 per meeting. Weigh-in is at 11:30 the meeting starts at 12:00.



We'd like to hear from you! If you have a question or comment for the Healthy Directions committee, e-mail Kathy Goodman at kathy.goodman@douglascounty-ne.gov, drop her a note to Human Resources, Rm 505, or call her at 444-6099.

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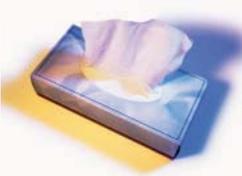
Preventing the 2009 H1N1 Flu

Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs



1. Clean your hands.

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also work.



2. Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.



3. Stay home when you are sick.

Stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.



4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.



5. Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.



6. Practice other good health habits.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.



www.douglascountyhealth.com

For more information, please go to: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/#stay_healthy

Quick & Healthy HOLIDAY EDITION RECIPES & TIPS

Brenda J. Ponichtera, Registered Dietitian

If it's tradition you want, without the extra calories and fat, consider some of the following ideas and recipes to lighten the calorie load and make your holiday meals more healthy for your whole family.



Make Fat-Free Gravy! Save calories when making gravy by pouring pan drippings into a glass measuring cup and allowing it to stand until the fat rises. Every one tablespoon skimmed off is 130 calories saved. You can also use canned broth or instant bouillon mixed with water.

#Flour Gravy

1 cup cold fat-free broth*, divided (chicken, turkey, or beef)
2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
seasonings to taste

Pour 1/4 cup of broth in a covered container. Add flour and shake well to prevent lumps. Follow directions below for microwave or stovetop.

STOVETOP: In a small saucepan, combine remainder of broth with flour mixture. Cook on medium until boiling, while stirring constantly with a wire whisk. Continue stirring until thickened.

MICROWAVE OVEN: In a 4-cup glass measuring cup, combine remainder of broth with flour mixture. Heat on high for 2–3 minutes (stirring well with a wire whisk after each minute) or until thickened.

Note: Use 3 1/2 tablespoons of flour for one 14.5-ounce can of broth.

*Sodium is figured for reduced sodium.

VARIATION: Mushroom Gravy—Add one small can of drained mushrooms gravy is thickened.

Makes 1 cup
8 servings
Each Serving: 2 Tbsps.
Carb Servings: 0
Exchanges
free
Nutrient Analysis
calories 9
total fat 0g
saturated fat 0g
cholesterol 0mg
sodium 47mg
total carbohydrate 2g
dietary fiber 0g
sugars 0g
protein 1g

TIPS

For more recipes, menus and tips go to: www.QuickandHealthy.net

Modify your stuffing recipe: Make a fat-free dressing by substituting broth for the margarine or butter in your recipe. It tastes just as good! You can also add more celery and onion to your recipe to increase the vegetables and further reduce the calories per serving.

Serve lighter appetizers: Change your favorite recipes by substituting lower fat ingredients such as low-fat or fat-free yogurt and sour cream. Use fruits and vegetables with dips and spreads, instead of chips or crackers. Remember portion control!

more ...

Source: *#Quick & Healthy Recipes and Ideas, 3rd Edition*, © Brenda J. Ponichtera, R.D., www.QuickandHealthy.net, Small Steps Press, publishing health conscious books for the general population, a division of the American Diabetes Association. **Ordering:** Individual orders (retail \$18.95): call 1-800-232-6733 or visit www.QuickandHealthy.net. Also available at local and online bookstores. Health professionals: Bulk orders (6 or more) 40% discount - call 703-299-2046 or e-mail: booksales@diabetes.org.



More Tips

Pumpkin Pie Tip: For something more traditional, try lightening your favorite pumpkin pie recipe by using evaporated skim milk and egg substitute. Make it with the traditional single crust or lower the calories even more by eliminating the crust. If you are making a crustless pie, be sure to spray the pan with nonstick cooking spray before pouring in the filling. This will prevent sticking and make it easier to serve. Top each slice with a dollop of fat-free whipped topping. Or try our Pumpkin Cheesecake (recipe below).

Lighten your mashed potatoes: Use fat-free milk or fat-free ranch dressing instead of whole milk or half and half. You can further reduce calories by using butter-flavored sprinkles instead of margarine.

Approach salads with caution: Salads are great as long as they are not made with regular cream cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise or cream. Your best choice would be a fresh green salad or fruit salad. Add your own low-fat dressing sparingly.

Great for a party! Serve with raw vegetables such as cucumber slices, carrot sticks, and celery. This is also good when spread on small slices of whole-grain bread and broiled.

Hot Artichoke and Spinach Dip

| | |
|---|---|
| 1/2 cup light mayonnaise | 1/2 teaspoon dried basil |
| 1/2 cup fat-free plain yogurt | 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese | 1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained, and squeezed |
| 2 teaspoons dried or 3 tablespoons fresh minced onion | 1 can (14 ounces) artichoke hearts, drained, rinsed, and coarsely chopped |
| 1 teaspoon chopped garlic | |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix together mayonnaise, yogurt, Parmesan cheese, onion, garlic, basil, and pepper. Add spinach and artichoke hearts. Mix until blended. Spread evenly in a pie plate that has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Bake for 25 minutes or until heated throughout.

Makes 3 cups - 12 servings

Each Serving 1/4 cup

Carb Servings: 0

Exchanges

1 vegetable

1 fat

Nutrient Analysis

calories 70

total fat 4g

saturated fat 1g

cholesterol 6mg

sodium 182mg

total carbohydrate 4g

dietary fiber 2g

sugars 1g

protein 3g

This recipe is for a 9" pie pan. The top will crack when cooking, so serve with a dollop of fat-free whipped topping.

Pumpkin Cheesecake (fat free)

| | |
|--|--|
| 24 ounces fat-free cream cheese (bar type) at room temperature | 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 3/4 cup canned pumpkin | 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves |
| 1/2 cup granulated sugar | 2 tablespoons packaged cornflake crumbs (optional) |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla extract | fat-free whipped topping, optional |
| 3/4 cup egg substitute (equal to 3 eggs) | |

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a large bowl, combine cream cheese, pumpkin, sugar, and vanilla. Using an electric mixer, beat at high speed until blended. On low speed, beat in egg substitute and spices. Increase speed to high, and continue until well blended.

Spray a 9" pie pan with nonstick cooking spray. Add cornflake crumbs (optional) to the pan and shake lightly to coat bottom and sides. Pour in cream cheese mixture. Bake for 45 minutes or until center is set but not firm. Cool on wire rack. Store in refrigerator for several hours. Serve with whipped topping.

Makes 12 servings

Each Serving

1/12 cheesecake

Carb Servings: 1

Exchanges

1 carbohydrate

Nutrient Analysis

calories 86

total fat 0g

saturated fat 0g

cholesterol 10mg

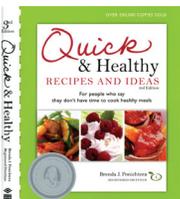
sodium 362mg

total carbohydrate 12g

dietary fiber 0g

sugars 8g

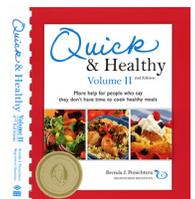
protein 9g



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Sign up for seasonal recipe newsletters and monthly recipe: email scaledwn@gorge.net and type "recipe" in the subject.