

Unit 2

Laugh Your Troubles Away

1. あなたは、どんなときに一番よく笑いますか。
2. 笑いの効能について考えてみましょう。

Pre-reading Exercises

1 Vocabulary 次の単語の意味として適切なものを右欄から選んで答えなさい。

- | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------|
| 1. therapeutic | () | a. 放出する |
| 2. beneficial | () | b. 気晴らし、娯楽 |
| 3. distraction | () | c. 明確な、確かな |
| 4. release | () | d. 活性化する |
| 5. activate | () | e. 有益な |
| 6. definite | () | f. 治療に役立つ |

2 Useful Expressions 下線部に注意して、次の英文を訳しなさい。

1. 過去分詞句の後置修飾

- The arrival of a good clown exercises a more beneficial influence upon the health of a town than of twenty asses laden with drugs.
- Norman Cousins made popular the idea that laughter is therapeutic in a 1976 article published in The New England Journal of Medicine.

2. allow + 目的語 + to～ (…に～させる)

Laughter is a welcome distraction that allows a person to forget about his or her aches and pains.

3. ～, while ... (～、ところが一方…)

One group watched a humorous video, while the other watched a travel video.

4. There is no ～ing (～することはできない)

There is no denying that after a good laugh, we feel more relaxed and have a better sense of well-being.

A 17th-century British physician, Thomas Sydenham, once said, "The arrival of a good clown exercises a more beneficial influence upon the health of a town than of twenty asses laden with drugs." The health benefits of laughter have been discussed for a long time. Norman Cousins made popular the idea that laughter is therapeutic in a 1976 article published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Later, in a book, he wrote: "I made the joyous discovery that ten minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect and would give me at least two hours of pain-free sleep." He almost completely relieved the excruciating pain of a spinal disease by reading humorous literature and watching funny movies.

Today, many scientists accept that laughter has a good effect on our health. Many research studies have shown that pain is reduced through laughter. In other words, laughter increases pain tolerance. Laughter is a welcome distraction that allows a person to forget about his or her aches and pains. But it goes deeper than that. Laughter actually seems to relieve pain by triggering the release of endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that are natural painkillers and give a general sense of well-being when released.

Laughter also appears to give the immune system a boost. It can decrease the effects of stress, activate germ-killing T-cells, and speed up the manufacture of new immune cells. In one study, 33 healthy adult women were divided into two groups. One group watched a humorous video, while the other watched a travel video. The former group reported a much more significant decrease in stress level. And their natural killer-cell levels were significantly higher as well.

Furthermore, laughter is thought to improve oxygen flow and circulation, burn calories, and reduce blood sugar. There is no denying that after a good laugh, we feel more relaxed and have a better sense of well-being.

Despite the above, laughter's particular effect on the health is still a matter of scientific debate: some studies show promising results, others show conflicting evidence. But whether the effect of laughter is scientifically demonstrated or not, we all know that laughing makes us feel better. How do we gain more access to this priceless medicine? That is the question.

Notes

exercise	及ぼす、行使する	ass	ろば	lade (荷を)	積み込む	genuine	心からの
belly laughter	<俗>大笑い	anesthetic	麻酔の	excruciating	非常に辛い	耐えが	
spinal	背骨の、脊髄の	trigger	誘発する	endorphins	エンドルフィン (鎮痛作用がある脳内物質)		
well-being	幸せ	immune system	免疫系	boost	増強、上昇	germ-killing	細菌を殺す
as well	同様に、その上	evidence	証拠				

Reading Comprehension

本文の内容から次の問いに最もふさわしいものを一つ選びなさい。

1. What did Thomas Sydenham really mean?
 - a. We need more clowns.
 - b. Drugs are good for the health.
 - c. Asses are funny.
 - d. Laughter has health benefits.
2. What did belly laughter do for Norman Cousins?
 - a. It cured his disease.
 - b. It relieved his pain.
 - c. It made him a writer.
 - d. It gave him a sense of humor.
3. What is released during laughter?
 - a. Endorphins.
 - b. Oxygen.
 - c. Aches and pains.
 - d. Blood sugar.
4. Which of these is NOT an effect of laughter on the immune system?
 - a. It can help reduce stress.
 - b. It activates T-cells.
 - c. It burns calories.
 - d. It increases killer-cell levels.
5. What is the ultimate benefit of laughter?
 - a. It makes us more interesting.
 - b. It has conflicting evidence.
 - c. It improves blood circulation.
 - d. It gives us a greater sense of well-being.

Listening Practice

CD
5

CDを聞いて () 内に語句を入れなさい。

Many experts believe that laughter (1) () our capacity to fight disease. Laughing (2) () the body and (3) () problems associated with high blood pressure, strokes, arthritis, and ulcers. Studies (4) () that laughter may also reduce the risk of heart disease. It has been shown that distressing emotions like depression, anxiety, and stress are all (5) () heart disease. A study conducted at the University of Maryland Medical Center suggests that a good sense of humor and the ability to (6) () at stressful situations helps (7) () damage to our minds and bodies.

Further Practice

[] 内の語句を並べ替えて英文を完成しなさい。

1. Humor and laughter strengthen our immune systems and help us recover from illness, [grief and anger / while / our health / impair / can].
2. [hearty / a / keep / laugh / us / to / allows] a positive, optimistic outlook even in difficult situations.
3. Laughter is beneficial for [increasing / the immune system / strengthening / and] a person's pain threshold.
4. [a loved one / experienced / the death / grief / through / of] can eventually strengthen one's character and enrich one's life.
5. [is / no / be / laughter / there / denying / can / that] crucial to patient care.