

The Benefits of Laughter for Diabetics

By Rosemary Black

[A good laugh can lower your blood sugar.](#)

Laughing not only makes you feel happy and mirthful on the inside, but if you have diabetes, it is also good for your health. In one study, researchers found that laughter not only decreased blood sugar levels in individuals with type 2 diabetes, it also decreased the levels of prorenin in the blood. Prorenin is involved in the onset of diabetic complications.

Laughter also was found to be very beneficial in another study reported in *Diabetes Care*. In a two-day study, people with type 2 diabetes attended a intentionally boring lecture on one day and a humorous comedy on the second day. When the blood sugar levels were then measured, it turned out that chuckling and giggling had a very beneficial effect on the blood sugar levels.

"The present study elucidates the inhibitory effect of laughter on the increase in post prandial blood sugar and suggests the importance of daily opportunity for laughter in patients with diabetes," wrote the study authors, led by Keiko Hayashi, RN.

Diabetics can definitely benefit from laughter, agrees Rashmi Gulati, MD, of Patients Medical in New York City. "Laughter is similar to exercise in that it improves the overall performance of the heart's muscular function and possibly wards off heart disease," she says. And besides lowering blood sugar, laughter has more benefits--it stimulates positive emotions and a more positive outlook.

Laughter can improve a person's mental functioning, reduce anxiety, and even increase the good (HDL) cholesterol, Gulati says. Furthermore, laughing also reduces stress levels, explains Kelly O'Connor, RD, CDE, at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore. "It's pretty well-known that stress can elevate blood sugar," she says. "Let's face it, just having diabetes is stressful. Laughter is a good way to cope."

So how can you get a little more laughter into your life? Rent funny videos, buy or check out of the library some humor books, and start watching some of the funny talk shows on TV. And spend more time with the people in your life who have the same sense of humor that you do. Some people are just a lot more upbeat by nature and can make you crack up, while others can bring you down. Bad moods and good moods are both contagious, so try to steer clear of people you know will turn your mood dark. So concentrate on being with people who will help you lighten up, tell jokes you find hilarious, and generally make you feel good about yourself.

Sources

Takashi Hayashi and Kazuo Murakami, "The effect of laughter on post-prandial glucose levels and gene expression in Type 2 diabetic patients," *Life Sciences*, 29 July 2009, pp 185-187.

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