

Laughter is the Best Medicine

Several years ago, Norman Cousins was diagnosed as being terminally ill and was given 6 months to live. He was told that his chance for recovery was 1 in 500. He came to realize that worry, depression and anger in his life had contributed to his disease. He started wondering that if illness could be caused by negativity, could wellness be created by positivity. He thought of making an experiment of himself. Laughter was among the most positive activities he could think of. He rented several funny movies including those of Keaton, Chaplin, Fields and the Marx Brothers. He read funny stories, asked his friends to call him whenever they said, heard or did something funny. He could not sleep many a times due to his pain, but he noted that laughing for 10 minutes relieved his pain for several hours, and he could sleep. Eventually, he completely recovered from his illness and lived another 20 happy and healthy years. He talked about his journey in his book "Anatomy of an Illness". He credits his recovery to visualization, the love of his family and friends, and laughter.

People sometimes think that laughter is a waste of time. It is a luxury. But that's not the truth. Laughter is essential for our equilibrium and our wellbeing. Laughter helps us get well and stay that way. Since Cousins' work, scientific studies revealed that laughter has a curative effect on the body, the mind and the emotions. Indulge in laughter as often as you can.

Use whatever makes you laugh – movies, sitcoms, books, cartoons, jokes and friends. Laugh long and loud. People may think you're strange, but sooner or later they'll join in even if they don't know what you're laughing about.

Some diseases may be contagious, but none of them is as contagious as the cure... laughter.

(Source: Peter McWilliams. *Chicken Soup for the Cancer Survivor's Soul: Healing Stories of Courage and Inspiration* By Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Aubrey, Nancy Mitchell, Beverly Kirkhart)



Lifestyle Choices may Offset Genetic Risks for Cancer

According to a new study, healthy lifestyle choices, including physical activity and a diet rich in whole grains, fruits and vegetables, may be able to counteract the genetic risks for five cancers.

A survey was conducted with around 2,00,000 individuals in the UK Biobank about their lifestyle habits from 2006 to 2010. The baseline genetic risks for various cancers were evaluated for the participants and they were assessed for new-onset cancer through 2019. It was noted that unhealthy habits heightened the overall risk of cancer by 32%. Unhealthy habits were associated with a heightened risk of eight types of cancer, including lung cancer, with a HR of 3.5, bladder cancer (HR 2.03), pancreatic cancer (HR 1.98), kidney cancer (HR 1.91), pharyngeal cancer (HR 1.69), uterine cancer (HR 1.63), colorectal cancer (HR 1.42) and breast cancer (HR 1.42). Of note, healthy lifestyles did not appear to diminish the risk of melanoma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, ovarian cancer or lymphocytic leukemia.

Healthy lifestyle choices appeared to be of greater benefit among people who have a high genetic susceptibility to colorectal, breast and pancreatic cancers, and may completely negate the genetic risk for lung and bladder cancers, stated authors... (Source: Medscape)