

NEWS Release



Touchmark at Wedgewood

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“IS LAUGHTER REALLY THE BEST MEDICINE?”

EDMONTON, Alberta — The start of a new year is as good a time as any to begin including daily doses of humor and laughter in your life. People often forget to take advantage of these two free coping mechanisms that can make a real difference in the quality of our lives. In an article just published in the Canadian-based *Journal of Active Aging* (vol. four, issue six), Marge Coalman, EdD, Wellness & Programs director for Touchmark, highlights the difference between these two resources for well-being.

“Laughter is a physical phenomenon, while humor is a perceptive belief,” says Coalman. After reviewing the research in this area, Coalman points out that laughter causes individuals to enter a positive emotional state that can boost the immune system by elevating antibody levels in the body. On the other hand, humor provides mental stimulation that can improve one’s mood, sometimes lasting for a prolonged period.

Putting fun in the fundamentals

Having the elements of laughter and humor more prevalent in our lives requires mindful and deliberate choices—and actions to modify our environment and habits. Following these tips will free our inner lightheartedness:

- **Create and seek inviting environments.** It is hard to feel cheerful and uplifted in a space that is unpleasant, dark and mundane. Surround yourself with things you love, such as photos of family and friends; art that makes you smile inside; music that feeds your soul; living, growing things like plants and pets; colors that bring moods of quiet or stimulation, depending on the room and its use; furniture you can mold into and that you just don’t want to leave, because it’s so comfortable; natural light whenever possible.
- **Spend time with people who support and care about you.** Rid yourself of naysayers and people who don’t wish you well. Choose friends and groups who you want to be with and who provide support and goodwill to you and those you love.

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- **Smile.** Smiles are contagious and work the muscles in your face that you want to strengthen and keep supple! Surprise everyone you meet with a smile; it will bring you well-being and make you and others more cheerful.
- **Be active and eat right.** Physical activity and good nutrition are important for the soul as well as the body. Moderate and well-balanced physical activity and nutritional choices lead to better health, restful sleep and improved function.
- **Simplify and choose.** Ridding yourself of clutter—emotional and physical—brings a smile of satisfaction and enhances well-being. Give yourself permission to throw things away; to lighten your schedule to what you like and enjoy doing. It is good to do “spring cleaning” during all the seasons of our lives.
- **Laugh out loud.** Turn a chuckle into a belly laugh. Watch and read things that are funny. Spend time being silly with your friends. Unleash the child within.
- **Choose joy.** Physically and spiritually strive to find those people and things that bring you joy. Volunteer for a cause you believe in; have tea with friend; read a book that is uplifting; hold a child’s hand.

“Think of humor this way,” says Coalman. “If life hands you lemons, make lemonade.”

According to Coalman, laughter and humor are among the best and most holistic medications people can use to stave off illness, reduce stress and increase positive immune-system responses to the hazards of living in a stress-filled world.

With the new year beginning, resolve to include daily doses of humor and laughter in your life.

For a copy of Coalman’s article, visit <http://www.touchmark.com/MAC-IsLaughterReallyTheBest.pdf>.

Coalman oversees Touchmark’s Health & Fitness Clubs, Life Enrichment & Wellness Program and assisted living and memory care programs. An internationally recognized speaker and writer, she just returned from making two presentations at the Active Aging conference, held in Florida. The first highlighted what those in the health and fitness industry and retirement communities must do to find, train and keep key employees. Her second presentation provided information regarding the use of exercise to cope with depression.

Touchmark is a North American leader in planning, building and operating resort-style retirement communities for those 55-plus, and has recently completed the first phase of a new community in west Edmonton. Situated in a picturesque ravine setting, Touchmark at Wedgewood has 66 bungalows and a 15-suite apartment complex offering numerous amenities and life enrichment activities, all designed to provide an enriching and relaxed environment for residents.