SWEET Success

California Diabetes and Pregnancy Program

Tip of the Month
~ # 8 ~

STRESS Buster
Laugh, and Laugh a lot!

"Laughter is the Best Medicine" is actually an excellent maxim for anyone with stress. Laughter has many benefits. "Studies on humor and laughter from Duke University, Loma Linda University, UCLA and others have shown:

- Laughing helps relax tense muscles.
- It reduces the production of stress hormones.
- Laughter and a positive attitude strengthen the immune system.
- Laughter allows a person to 'forget' about aches and pains and to perceive pain as less intense.
- A good laugh is like an aerobic workout for the heart and lungs, increasing the body's ability to use oxygen.
- It helps lower high blood pressure."

Doctors who advocate laughter do not say it will cure diseases, only that it acts as an anti-stress measure and can be a 'supplementary and preventive therapy'. There is actually an International Laughter Club in India with 400 branches!

Pregnant moms may feel they do not have a lot to laugh about, but if you can add humor to their appointment, you are not only lowering their stress but you are inviting them to see difficult issues from a lighter perspective.

Do you have cut-out cartoons on the wall in your office? Can you laugh at yourself? Can you tell a funny story about pregnancy or about childbirth or about testing blood sugar or about diet snafus? Don't try this with someone who is mired in a bad situation and needs support for her struggle. But do try it with those patients who could use a boost, who are on the edge of overcoming a challenge and who would do well with the addition of some helpful positive attitude coming from a supportive external source.

The best thing about laughter is that there is no known physiological negative side-effect.

Thank you for all you do for your Sweet Success moms.

(These ideas and the quote came from an article in HeartMath.com)