

# Humor Month Newsletter

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## *It's no joke - Laughter is Healthy!*

According to the Bible, "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Now, modern science may be validating that Old Testament proverb -- a good laugh may actually help fend off heart attacks and strokes.

"We believe laughing is good for your health," said Michael Miller of the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, who led the research. "And we think we have evidence to show why that's the case."

So they decided to examine the ability of blood vessels to expand, after subjects watched two very different movie scenes. One was the violent opening scene from "Saving Private Ryan", the other was a humorous scene from "Kingpin."

Using ultrasound to measure blood flow, the researchers discovered striking differences depending on which movie the volunteers had watched. Blood flow in the brachial artery was significantly reduced in 70% of the subjects after watching the stressful movie scene. However, blood flow significantly increased in 95% of the subjects after watching the funny scene. That's the same increase that would be expected following a 20-30 minute workout. The researchers suggested that laughter may release chemicals that counteract the effects of stress hormones and cause blood vessels to dilate. If so, it may be one explanation for the positive link between emotional and physical health.

## *History of April Fools Day*

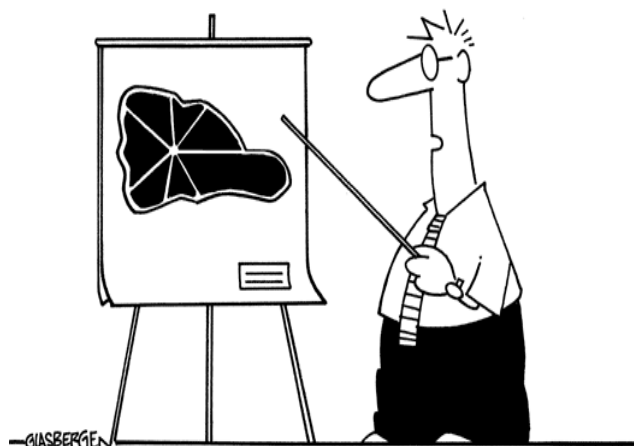
In 1708 a correspondent wrote in to the British Apollo magazine to ask, "Whence proceeds the custom of making April Fools?" The question is one that many people are still asking today. The puzzle that April Fool's Day presents to cultural historians is that it was only during the eighteenth century that detailed references to it (and curiosity about it) began to appear. But at that time, the custom was already well established throughout northern Europe and was regarded as being of great antiquity. How had the tradition been adopted by so many different European cultures without provoking more comments in the written record? References to April Fool's Day can be found as early as the 1500s. However, these early references were infrequent and tended to be vague and ambiguous. Shakespeare, writing in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, made no mention of April Fool's Day, despite being, as Charles Dickens Jr. put it, a writer who "delights in fools in general." Many theories have been put forward about how the tradition began. Unfortunately, none of them are very compelling. So the origin of the "custom of making April Fools" remains as much a mystery to us as it was back in 1708.

## *How to enhance your sense of humor*

### *A daily Ritual*

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**"At the request of those who are following a low-carb diet, my pie chart has been replaced by a steak chart."**

## *Joke of the Week*

A guy took his girl friend to her first Longhorn football game. They had great seats right behind their team's bench. After the game, he asked her how she liked the experience. "Oh, I really liked it," she replied, "Especially the tight pants and all the big muscles, but I just couldn't understand why they were killing each other over 25 cents." Dumbfounded, her date asked, "What do you mean?" "Well, I saw them flip a coin and one team got it and then for the rest of the game, all they kept screaming was: 'Get the quarterback. Get the quarterback!' It's only 25 cents!"

Sources: <http://humormonth.com/NHM2009.html>, [www.glasbergen.com](http://www.glasbergen.com), <http://www.ajokeaday.com/Clasificacion.asp?ID=82&Pagina=2>, [www.cbs.com/latenight/lateshow](http://www.cbs.com/latenight/lateshow).