

# Harnett County Caregiver Support Group Newsletter

Issue 4 April 2022

## Wellness Tips: Healthy Reasons to Laugh



### Highlights

#### Boredom Can Be Good for Your Brain

Nearly a century ago, philosopher Bertrand Russell wrote that a certain amount of boredom is “essential to a happy life.” Researchers are now echoing his advice. They say moments of idle time allow the brain to rest, leaving you refreshed and rejuvenated. When the mind is able to wander and daydream, it can spark creativity, and help you to identify new interests and plan future goals.

#### Fitness Tip: Stand Up

A standing workout will almost always burn more calories than a seated one, with the exception of a high-intensity cycling class. Get on your feet for some more vigorous activity to see real results.



Kidding around has some serious benefits and not just for your funny bone! Here's how laughter can improve your life:

*Provides a workout.* A bout of boisterous laughter is like a mild workout. Your heart starts beating faster, sending oxygen throughout your body and stimulating muscles. Giggling for 10 to 15 minutes can burn as much as 50 calories.

*Boosts your immune system.* Laughs produce positive thoughts, which prompt your body to release antibodies that help fight illness.

*Lifts your spirits.* Laughing boosts the brain's level of dopamine and serotonin, chemicals that can improve mood and may help lessen depression. Often, people who embrace laughter find it easier to cope with difficult situations and let go of stress and anger.

*Keeps you connected.* Laughter is contagious. One researcher estimates we are 30 times more likely to laugh with others than when we're alone. Spending time with people can

help you laugh more and improve your quality of life. Laughing together is also a common way to bond with loved ones as well as make new friends.

*Relieves pain temporarily.* When you laugh, your body releases endorphins, the “feel-good” brain chemicals that act as natural pain relievers. Research shows that your muscles stay relaxed for up to 45 minutes after good chuckles health ease tension and stress.



#### Benefits of the Caregiver Program Reminder:

Remember one of the benefits of our Family Caregiver Program is that we support each other whether we are meeting or not. Reach out and connect to members for contacts. Build healthy friendships with people “in your shoes”.



#### Next Meeting:

Our next meeting in combination with the Grandparents Support group will be held on **Wednesday, April 27 at 10:00 am** at the new **Harnett County Resource Center/Library** beside the **Courthouse in Lillington**. Join us as we learn about the value of **volunteering** and how it helps with **our mental health** from **Liberty Hospice and Heritage Health and Wellness**.

Please call **LeAnn B. Blackmon** at (910) 814-6071 for more information about this wonderful program.

#### Cool Ranch Shredded Chicken Tacos (Crockpot Recipe)

##### Ingredients

- 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 taco seasoning packet (or this homemade version: 1T chili powder, 1tsp pepper, and 1/2tsp of each of the following – salt, ground cumin, red pepper flakes, paprika, oregano, garlic powder, onion powder)
- 1 dry ranch seasoning packet (or this homemade version: 1T dried parsley, 1tsp garlic powder, 1tsp onion powder, 1tsp dried onion flakes, 3/4tsp dill, 1/2tsp pepper, and 1/2 tsp salt)



##### Preparation

1. Combine all ingredient in crockpot and cook on “low” setting for 6-8 hours.
2. Shred chicken and mix with sauces and spices left in crockpot.

