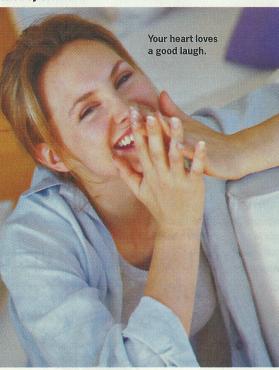
## **lealth News**

dited by Sarí Harrar



## **Funny Heart Protection**

lew research: Take these findings—please!

when researchers from the Iniversity of Maryland Medcal Center in Baltimore tested the "humor quotient" of 300 eople, they found that those with heart disease were 40% ess likely to laugh at the affes, mix-ups, and irritations of everyday life than those without cardiovascular problems. (Presented at the American Heart Association's annual meeting, Nov 2000)

"Laughter is no substitute for eating properly, exercising, and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol levels with medication if need be," says study author
Michael Miller, MD, director
of the university's Center for
Preventive Cardiology. "But
enjoying a few laughs every
day couldn't hurt, and our
research suggests that it
might help your heart health."

Researchers speculate that a good chuckle might keep hearts healthy by helping to minimize inflammation in the blood vessels, decreasing the risk of clots, or helping to maintain normal blood pressure levels.

The bonus? This remedy is

## Laughter's Hidden Health Benefits

- ▶ Researchers at Loma Linda University School of Medicine in California have found that the positive emotions associated with a good chuckle activate immune system cells and decrease stress hormones.
- ▶ A study from Marywood University in Scranton, PA, has found that students who watched a sitcom prior to giving a speech had only a moderate rise in heart rate. Laughter seemed to inoculate the sitcom group against anxiety.

LEFT, IMAGEBANK; RIGHT, KURT WILSON