



For information, contact: **Becky Happach**
beckyh@rah-cares4u.com
(626)-584-8130

Smile! It Improves Your Health!

We smile even when we're still in the womb. When we are children, we smile more than 400 times a day. Yet as we age, our faces show more blank expressions or even frowns. The happiest of adults smile an average of 40–50 times a day, while the average adult only smiles 20 times a day. Fortunately, there's good news about smiling that will make us grin. Besides others viewing us as more attractive, confident and relaxed when we smile, growing research finds that smiling elicits a plethora of health benefits, including less stress and a happier, longer life.

Genuine smiling involves both mouth and eye muscles in which the cheeks rise and the skin around the eyes crinkle. Authentic smiles convey a positive self-image and lighter mood. A University of Kansas study testing people's behaviors in pressure-filled tasks shows that genuine smiles lower stress responses and heart rate. Individuals who smile even through tough situations are found to feel better emotionally and physically.

"Smiling is one of the universal expressions that bridges all generations," said Becky Happach, Community Liaison, Right At Home Pasadena. "In our older clients who deal with physical limitations and the emotional stressors of aging, we see positive changes when we engage them in activities, conversations and memories that elicit smiles. No one is really too old to smile."

A study of baseball card photos taken in 1952 revealed that the smiling baseball players outlived their non-smiling counterparts by seven years. The conclusion: Cracking a smile can add years to your life. Recent studies on the effects of turning a frown upside down also report that smiling is similar to getting restful sleep and actually awakens your brain with feel-good neural messaging.

Smiling also is shown to enliven the orbitofrontal cortex, the sensory reward center in the brain, which means when you view another person smiling, you actually feel rewarded. Grinning from ear to ear, or even cracking a slight smile, boosts physical health in many specific ways. For example, smiling:

- **Fortifies the immune system.** From grinning to beaming, a happy face makes for an upbeat mood and relaxed body, which enhance immune function. Smiling literally helps prevent flu and colds.

- **Produces stress-reducing hormones** like cortisol, dopamine and adrenaline. Even a shy grin activates the brain to counter high levels of stress hormones that increase the risk of heart disease, heart attack, stroke and structural changes in the brain's memory.
- **Releases the body's natural drugs.** With a happy face, the body releases pain-reducing endorphins to relax the body, reduce heart rate and lower blood pressure.
- **Positively changes mood.** Psychologists note that if a person grins for 60 seconds, even if the grin is faked or forced, the body releases mood-lifting serotonin that helps the body feel contented again. The British Dental Health Foundation concludes that smiles are naturally sweet and can produce the same emotional response as a person eating 2,000 chocolate bars.
- **Uplifts the face for a more youthful look.** The face's smile muscles physically draw up the face, making a person look younger and more vibrant.

Breaking into a happy face makes a person look friendly and engaging. Flashing the pearly whites also significantly improves overall physical and emotional health at any age. And that is something to smile about.

About Right at Home

Founded in 1995, Right at Home offers in-home companionship and personal care and assistance to seniors and disabled adults who want to continue to live independently. Local Right at Home offices are independently owned and operated and directly employ and supervise all caregiving staff, each of whom is thoroughly screened, trained, bonded and insured prior to entering a client's home. Right at Home's global office is based in Omaha, Nebraska, with franchise offices located in 42 states nationwide and throughout the world. For more information on Right at Home, visit About Right at Home at <http://www.rightathome.net/about-us> or read the Right at Home caregiving blog at <http://www.rightathome.net/blog>. To sign up for Right at Home's free adult caregiving e-newsletter, Caring Right at Home, visit <http://caringnews.com>.

About Right at Home of Pasadena

The [Pasadena](#) office of Right at Home is a locally owned and operated franchise office of Right at Home, Inc., serving the communities of Pasadena, Altadena, South Pasadena, San Marino, La Canada, La Crescenta, Verdugo City, Montrose, Sierra Madre, Arcadia, San Fernando, Crescenta and San Gabriel Valleys.

For more information, contact Right at Home of Pasadena at <http://www.pasadena.rightathome.net> (626)-584-8130 or by email at **BeckyH@RAH-Cares4U.com**.