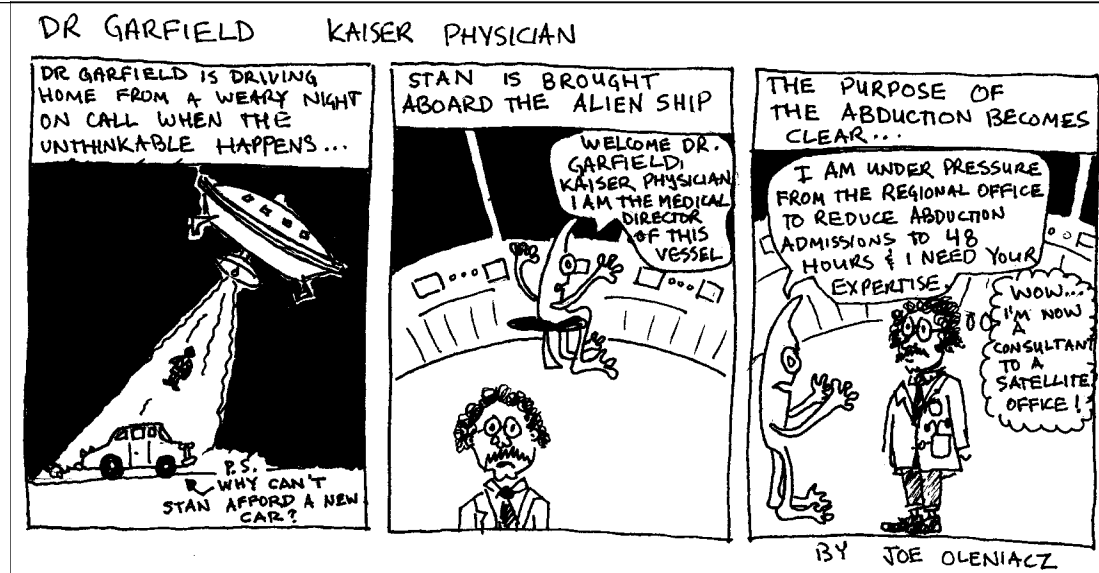
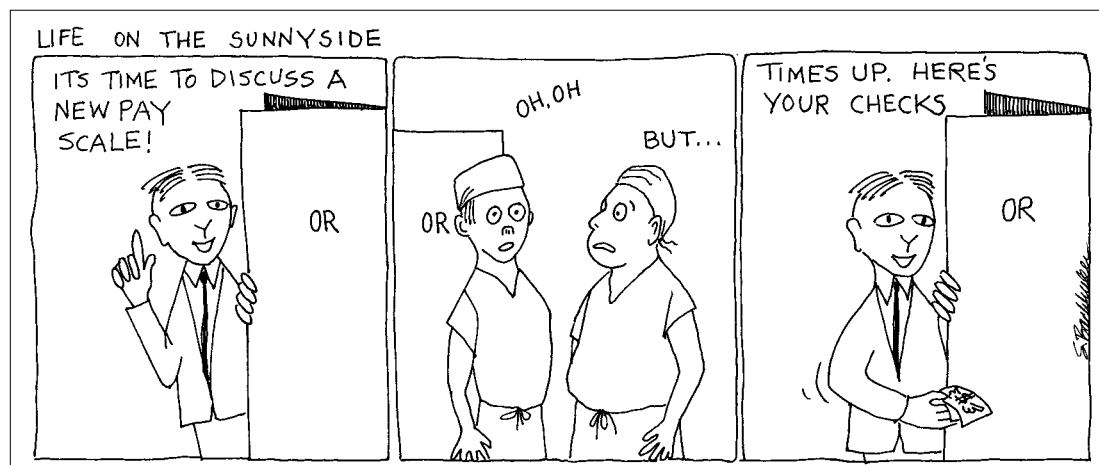




The Lighter Side of Medicine



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How to Use Humor to Stay Healthy

Babies start to laugh when they are 10 weeks old; six weeks later they are laughing about once every hour. Four-year-olds laugh once every four minutes. The average grown-up is said to laugh only about 15 times per day. Sadly, our culture tends to inhibit humor. We learn to associate growing up with "getting serious," and being "serious" is somehow equated with being solemn and humorless. We are ordered to "wipe that smile off your face" and told that things are "no laughing matter." Sometimes we repress our good humor, because we're afraid that others will think we're frivolous or foolish. Our funny bone gets broken. Fortunately, a laugh prescription is not a bitter pill to swallow. Here are some suggestions for repairing your sense of humor and regaining healthy laughter:

- Expose yourself to humor
- Tell a joke
- Look for the funny side
- Try a retake
- Use humor to handle anxiety
- Hang out with happy people
- Keep a humor journal
- Laugh at yourself
- Exaggerate
- Try humor instead of anger
- Make up a comedy routine
- Put on a happy face

Adapted and reprinted with permission from "The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook" by David Sobel, MD and Robert Ornstein, PhD (Los Altos, CA: DRx, 1996) and "The Mind/Body Health Newsletter." For further information about the book or for newsletter subscriptions, contact the Center for Health Sciences at 1-800-222-4745.

Do you have a humorous medical joke, anecdote or cartoon? Refer to the Table of Contents pages to find out how to submit it to us.