**Humor – It's Not Always Funny**

By Julia Ransohoff, high school student writer, from Sutter Health Palo Alto Medical Foundation, August 2013

You may have heard that laughing can be good for your health, but it depends on what you are laughing about. If you are hurting someone's feelings, humor can be a bad thing.

**Bad Humor**

It is one thing to laugh **with** someone, but you know there is a problem if you are laughing **at** someone.

This is a form of [bullying](http://www.pamf.org/preteen/growingup/school/bullying.html), and someone could get his or her feelings hurt. Even if the person you are laughing at does not know what you are doing, there are many ways they could find out.

Humor can also be hurtful if it is used in the form of gossip. Talking and laughing about someone behind their back is not a good idea. It is mean even if the other person does not find out.

**Some Subjects are Never Funny**

Here is a list of topics that are never funny to joke about:

* Ethnic or religious jokes
* Homophobic jokes (about gay or lesbian people)
* Humor about a person's body part or appearance

**Know where to draw the line**.

It might be difficult to determine what kind of humor is OK. In some cases, it is fine to joke around with your friends if everyone knows you are joking.

**The Golden Rule**

Here is a rule that will help you draw the line: If you have to ask yourself if what you are about to say might hurt someone, then **do not say it**.