



**Blanche Ely High  
School**

Pompano Beach

**SPECIAL  
Heart Edition**

# Nursing Newsletter

## Heart Edition

### From the Desk of Mr. Krause: The Chemical of Love

Why do we fall in love? Why do we feel that insatiable feeling of loneliness when our parents, children, or partners are gone for a long period-of-time, or indefinitely? Why do we feel such a strong bond with our pets? Oxytocin may help explain that reaction. Oxytocin is a peptide hormone produced by the hypothalamus and released by the posterior pituitary. It acts like a neurotransmitter in the brain and plays an important role in mother-child bonding that occurs during breast-feeding.

This theory was tested in a 1909 study at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, where Cort Pedersen and Arthur Prange raised virgin mice and subjected them to crying and distressed pups. The virgin mice mostly ignored them and walked over them, showing no affection. Conversely, virgin mice subjected to injections of oxytocin seem to have self-stimulated maternal instincts. They licked and stood over pups, built nests, and even carried unfamiliar pups to their nests.

Several studies underway have demonstrated links between dogs, their owners petting behavior, and increases in oxytocin levels in both. One such study, at the Jichi Medical University in Shimotsuke, Japan, has shown that when dogs and owners mutually gaze at each other, the owners are rewarded with a rush of oxytocin to the brain. This relaxes respirations, decreases heart rate, and reduces anxiety. It was not clear whether the effects for dogs were the same; however, it's at least a great argument to mom and dad for permission to adopt a dog.



### Keeping Your Heart Healthy

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Take steps today to lower your risk of heart disease.

To help prevent heart disease, you can:

- Eat healthy.
- Get active.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation.
- Manage stress.

#### Am I at risk for heart disease?

Everyone is at risk for heart disease. But you are at higher risk for heart disease if you:

- Have high cholesterol or high blood pressure
- Smoke
- Are overweight or obese
- Don't get enough physical activity
- Don't eat a healthy diet

Your age and family history also affect your risk for heart disease. Your risk is higher if:

- You are a woman over age 55
- You are a man over age 45
- Your father or brother had heart disease before age 55
- Your mother or sister had heart disease before age 65

But the good news is there's a lot you can do to prevent heart disease.

## When the Heart is Broken

Many articles and books have been written about the subject of grief. *Good Grief* (Westberg, 1979) discusses what happens to people when they lose someone or something important (health, security, money, material comforts, a home, a job, or a spouse). Westberg states that there are healthy and unhealthy ways to grieve and that people should be familiar with the good aspects of grief. He contends that people who handle daily “little griefs” in a positive manner prepare themselves for healthy reactions to larger griefs when they occur.

The following are the ten stages of grief as described by Westberg:

- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. State of Shock                | 6. Guilt Feelings       |
| 2. Expressing Emotion            | 7. Anger and Resentment |
| 3. Depression and Loneliness     | 8. Resistance           |
| 4. Physical Symptoms of Distress | 9. Hope                 |
| 5. Panic                         | 10. Affirming Reality   |

Grieving is a highly individual experience; there’s no right or wrong way to grieve. How you grieve depends on many factors, including your personality and coping style, your life experience, your faith, and how significant the loss was to you.

Inevitably, the grieving process takes time. Healing happens gradually; it can’t be forced or hurried—and **there is no “normal” timetable for grieving**. Some people start to feel better in weeks or months. For others, the grieving process is measured in years. Whatever your grief experience, it’s important to be patient with yourself and allow the process to naturally unfold.

### How to Deal with the Grieving Process

While grieving a loss is an inevitable part of life, there are ways to help cope with the pain, come to terms with your grief, and eventually, find a way to pick up the pieces and move on with your life.

1. Acknowledge your pain.
2. Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.
3. Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.
4. Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you.
5. Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.
6. Recognize the difference between grief and depression.



## Heart Healthy Food

As new evidence emerges, the link between diet and heart disease grows stronger.

Including these heart-healthy foods as part of a nutritious, well-balanced diet can help keep your heart in good shape and minimize your risk of heart disease.

1. Leafy vegetables
2. Whole Grains and Beans
3. Berries
4. Avocados
5. Fatty Fish and fish oil
6. Seeds, Walnuts, and Almonds
7. Dark Chocolate
8. Tomatoes
9. Garlic
10. Green Tea

## Rest your heart with Emergency Stress Stoppers

Emergency stress stoppers are actions to help you defuse stress in the moment. You may need different stress stoppers for different situations, and sometimes it helps to combine them. Here are some ideas:

1. Count to 10 before you speak or react.
2. Take a few slow, deep breaths until you feel your body un-clench a bit.
3. Go for a walk, even if it’s just to the restroom and back. It can help break the tension and give you a chance to think things through.
4. Try a quick meditation or prayer to get some perspective.
5. If it’s not urgent, sleep on it and respond tomorrow. This works especially well for stressful emails and social media trolls.
6. Walk away from the situation for a while, and handle it later once things have calmed down.
7. Break down big problems into smaller parts. Take one step at a time, instead of trying to tackle everything at once.
8. Turn on some chill music or an inspirational podcast to help you deal with road rage.
9. Take a break to pet the dog, hug a loved one or do something to help someone else.
10. Work out or do something active.