



## Grief is Physical

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Your body grieves. It feels your emotional pain and shows it. You may have sleeplessness, stomach pains, diarrhea, headaches, loss of appetite, difficulty breathing, overeating, loss of memory, chest pains, loss of energy, sexual problems, etc. These symptoms are real. Your body, like your mind, heart and life has a lot of healing to do. be gentle with it.

**Eat Carefully** — If it's hard to eat or swallow, drink lots of water and fruit juices. Eat easy foods: soups, fruits, and cereals. Water is especially important because people who grieve often forget to drink. You might want to pour out eight cups into a pitcher and make sure you drink it during the day. It's also a time to take a vitamin/mineral supplement. Your body is under such stress that getting nutrients from food alone may not be enough.

**Get Plenty of Rest** — It may be hard to sleep or relax. Find a quiet place, lie back and lift up your feet and just be silent. You may have a favorite place you'd like to go, a special room, a porch swing, or a friend's house. You're processing your grief right now, even while you sleep, so be careful of sleeping pills. Avoid them if you can. Try a cup of warm milk before bed, have a time to relax before you go to sleep, take a nap when you need it.

**Avoid Alcohol and Drugs** — This is a time when it's easy to take something to help you forget, to help wind down. This can make you feel even worse. Drugs and alcohol dull feelings and put grief on hold. Months later, when your pain returns, you may find yourself alone and without support.

**Exercise** — Exercise, even if you have to force yourself. Start with a 15-minute walk and work up to an hour. Ride a stationary bike...run a little. Making your body move helps your emotions relax. Often, the less you want to exercise the more you need to. Exercise is a good way to deal with anger, to talk mentally to yourself.

**Drive Carefully!** — Many parents have accidents because they can't think or react quickly. You may become distracted and distanced from reality. When you need to go somewhere, ask someone to drive, or drive very carefully.

**Get Support** — Set up a personal support group you can call together at any time, or a list of support people you can call at any time. Make sure they know your ups and downs and how you feel. They will want to know this.

**Source: Family Information Services, Minneapolis, MN. Phone: (800) 852-8112 or website: [www.familyinfoserv.com](http://www.familyinfoserv.com)**

*By Sharon Turnbull, Omaha, NE, Centering Corporation, 1990.*