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This guide is written to explain the what, why and where of oxytocin in a no-nonsense fashion. It is not intended to diagnose or treat any condition mentioned or not mentioned here. You are encouraged to print this guide and take it to your physician as a useful educational tool for working with oxytocin from a medical perspective. Please understand that oxytocin is a naturally occurring hormone in the brain. It is released through very simple acts such as receiving a hug, being listened to, laughter, touch, orgasm, chocolate, good food, and good music to name a few. However, for adults and children who have experienced trauma at early ages, or who’ve been exposed to prolonged states of stress, the brain’s natural oxytocin response can be remarkably diminished, leading to severe behavior challenges, attachment issues, depression, anxiety, panic attacks and more.

Much of the literature and findings regarding oxytocin has been written by scientists for scientist. Many are sponsored by universities and pharmaceutical companies. They may be difficult to understand and decipher or even worse, leave average readers feeling more confused than before they started reading. It is important that a hormone with the potential of oxytocin be communicated and understood in a manner that makes sense and has real-life application.

**WHY AM I QUALIFIED TO PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION?**

Admittedly, I’m relatively new to the science of oxytocin. However, I’ve been studying it intensively for the past three years. It’s my background of clinical practice, research and theory that can be most useful to you. I have studied
the effects of trauma and stress on the neurology of the brain and body for over ten years. During that time, I have pioneered a therapy and parenting approach that maximizes the activity of oxytocin without realizing I was doing that. My approach has proven effective in helping adults and children throughout the world recover from traumatic experiences. I’ve helped adults and children recover from depression and anxiety. Parents raising children who’ve experienced early trauma and neglect have benefited from my parenting approach. I have also effectively treated clients diagnosed with reactive attachment disorder, bipolar, depression, attention deficit disorder, autism and oppositional defiant disorder. As a clinician I have received worldwide recognition. The Post Institute Network includes almost 20,000 members of parents and professionals who closely follow my parenting and therapy model.

I have written and co-written nine books and authored over twenty-five DVD and audio CD programs. You can learn more about this work at www.postinstitute.com. My involvement in this work helped me recognize the far-reaching implications of oxytocin, not only in clinical work and the POST parenting model, but in all adult and child interactions. I quickly realized that information about oxytocin’s valuable benefits must be shared.

I am fascinated with oxytocin and excited about its potential for increased well-being in society, especially for people who’ve tried a wide array of psychotropic medications with little gain or have experienced painful and life-altering side effects.

If something will work for the most challenging population, doesn’t it make sense that it will work for less challenging, or perhaps other challenging issues? The answer is yes! Oxytocin is already proving effective for treating autism and schizophrenia. In trial research which I am supporting, it is proving to be tremendously effective for both adults and children who have otherwise not responded to years of previous medication use for a variety of behavioral and emotional disorders. This hormone is very important. I hope this report offers clear information about oxytocin so you realize its possibilities and benefit from this knowledge.
For an in-depth explanation of oxytocin for adults and relationships, read *The Chemistry of Connection* by Susan Kuchinskas. To understand how to apply the tools to releasing oxytocin in parenting children with severe behavior challenges, read my book *From Fear to Love* or *The Great Behavior Breakdown*, available at [www.postinstitute.com](http://www.postinstitute.com).

**WHY IS LOVE IMPORTANT?**

Love is the feeling and experience that ties us together. When we experience too much stress and anxiety in our lives, it breaks down vital relationships and leaves us feeling lonely and isolated. Adults who are under constant stress and anxiety experience more bouts of depression, dissatisfaction in life and increased health challenges.

**WHAT IS OXYTOCIN?**

Oxytocin, a peptide that functions as both a hormone and neurotransmitter, has broad influences on social and emotional processing throughout the brain and body. Oxytocin is a peptide of nine amino acids that is produced in the hypothalamus and released into both the brain and bloodstream. Functioning as both a neurotransmitter and hormone, oxytocin’s role throughout the body is widespread. Included is the hypothalamus, amygdala, hippocampus, brainstem, heart, uterus and regions of the spinal cord which regulates the autonomic nervous system, especially the parasympathetic branch (Neumann 2008). Oxytocin’s role in reproductive functions is well known. Its contribution to pair-bond formation has been systematically studied (Gimpl and Fahrenholz 2001).

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

In our stressful and stressed-out society, it’s not surprising that science has focused most of its research on the stress response. But there's another response that's just as important. Kerstin Uvnas-Moberg, the Swedish researcher who first identified it, calls it the "calm and connection system." In her 2003 book, *The Oxytocin Factor*, she describes how oxytocin calms the body while it helps us connect with other people.
Oxytocin influences so many processes of the body/mind that it's difficult to identify a calm and connection circuit that would be similar to the fear circuit. But, like the fear circuit, the hypothalamus and pituitary gland play a central role in the calm and connection circuit. The hypothalamus is the beginning of the chain reaction that sends adrenaline rushing through the body. It is the command central for the oxytocin response. The hypothalamus releases oxytocin directly into the parts of the brain that handle positive social interaction. It also sends some to the pituitary gland for release into the bloodstream where it affects internal organs.

Many parts of the brain process positive interactions we have with other people. What LINKS them is that they all can 'take in' oxytocin. There isn't one, simple piece of the brain that embodies this calming, connection system. Pepperdine University psychologist Louis Cozolino has named the group of structures, the "social brain." That is a simple and effective way of thinking of it.

There's a unique and very important aspect to the social brain. Uvnas-Moberg points out that nerve cells that release oxytocin tend to create a positive feedback loop. If one cell releases some oxytocin, the cells around it will begin to release it as well. Additionally, the more oxytocin that's circulating, the more others cells release too.

What seems to happen in the brain is that when we get a positive signal like a smile from someone, the hypothalamus releases a small amount of oxytocin into the brain. This oxytocin stimulates cells in the social brain to release still more oxytocin. Oxytocin calms down the activity of the amygdala, reducing fear and anxiety and helping us to respond to the other person (Kuchinskas, 2009).

In humans, oxytocin is released during hugging and pleasant physical touch. It plays a part in the human sexual response cycle. It appears to change the brain signals related to social recognition via facial expressions, perhaps by changing the firing of the amygdala, the part of the brain that plays a
primary role in the processing of important emotional stimuli. In this way, oxytocin in the brain may be a potent mediator of human social behavior (Kain 2008).

Reporter Maia Szalavitz wrote an article in the May 2008 edition for the journal New Scientist. In the article she states, "Oxytocin's ability to connect social contact with feelings of pleasure and well-being has got researchers excited about potential therapeutic uses, since so many mental illnesses involve disorders of sociability or empathy. An obvious starting point is autism, which is marked by difficulty understanding the minds of others, aversion to human contact, and repetitive behaviors such as rocking".

According to the article, Eric Hollander of Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, is studying what happens when oxytocin is given to autistic adults. He found that a single intravenous infusion produced improvements that lasted two weeks (Biological Psychiatry, vol. 61, p.498).

These statements and findings are also quite interesting when considering that Allan Schore in his seminal text on attachment, Affect Regulation and the Origin of the Self, references a study by Taylor, et al. 1998 that affect dysregulation is considered to be a fundamental mechanism involved in all psychiatric disorders!

Oxytocin coordinates both the causes and effects of positive social interactions. During social interactions, oxytocin can be released by sensory stimuli perceived as positive, including touch, warmth and odors. The consequences of positive social interactions, such as reduced sympathoadrenal activity and enhanced parasympathetic-vagal activity, also may be mediated by oxytocin. Because the release of oxytocin can become conditioned to emotional states and mental images, the actions of this peptide may provide an additional explanation for the long-term benefits of positive experiences (Moberg 1998).

The Atlanta Center for the Study of Disease (1996) estimated that more than eighty percent of diseases are related to stress. To state this differently, if you listed all the conditions and diseases related to stress or aggravated
by stress, you’d have to list nearly every known condition. Oxytocin is the “anti-stress” hormone. By easing stress, oxytocin supports the healing of all stress related conditions. (Robinson, 2008)

**WHEN WAS IT DISCOVERED?**

In 1906, the English researcher Sir Henry Dale discovered a substance in the pituitary gland that could speed up the birthing process. He named it oxytocin from the Greek words for “quick” and “child labor”. Later, he found that it also promoted the expulsion of breast milk. Now it appears that oxytocin plays a much larger physiological role than previously recognized, since under many circumstances, it has the ability to produce the effects that we associate with the state of calm and connection (Moberg 2003).

**WHAT IS IT USEFUL FOR?**

In the article *Central nervous system actions of oxytocin and modulation of behavior in humans*, published in Molecular Medicine Today, June 1997, researcher Margaret McCarthy pointed out, "A continuous stress response can ultimately be deleterious and reducing the reaction under appropriate circumstances has substantial advantages."

**Adults:**

Chronic stress hinders the healthy and natural production of oxytocin in the brain. Such experiences are what lead cellular biologist and author of *The Biology of Belief*, Bruce Lipton, to state that 98% of diseases and disorders can be attributed to stress in the autonomic nervous system. When this occurs the ability to relax after everyday stressful events becomes increasingly difficult. After a period of time, such experiences cause prolonged anxiety, emotional overwhelm, and in some instances, depression. Furthermore, reduced oxytocin has even been found in the brains of adult survivors of abuse. A study of 22 healthy women revealed that those with moderate to severe exposure to childhood abuse or neglect had lower concentrations of oxytocin in their CSF fluid as compared to those who reported no or mild abuse. CSF oxytocin levels were also inversely proportional to the severity and duration, as well as current anxiety ratings, with a particular strong correlation seen in cases of emotional abuse (Heim et al. 2008)
Oxytocin plays a vital role in promoting factors that enhance well-being. First, Oxytocin plays a critical role at enhancing factors within the individual which promote well-being. Oxytocin induces increase in level of trust and reduction of fear through modulating the response of amygdala and other central structures to stress and fear. Oxytocin increases approach and pro-social behavior and enhances social interactions, as evidenced by human and animal studies. Oxytocin reduces subjective sense of anxiety, increases overall calm and is implicated in non-verbal intelligence. Oxytocin is also implicated in many physiological effects, including reduction in free cortisol levels, blood pressure, analgesia and pro-wound healing.

Secondly, its effects extend to promote factors that are favorable to well-being at the interpersonal level. Oxytocin plays a key role in both the consummatory and the reward aspect of sexual behavior. Oxytocin levels correlate positively with enhanced sexual behavior, intensity of feelings of romantic love, as well as mother–infant bonding. Conversely, its dysfunction is implicated in Neuropsychiatric conditions. Exogenous (having a cause external to the body) Oxytocin decreases persistent fear and over-activation of amygdala as observed in patients with schizophrenia and related disorders. Oxytocin use also decreases repetitive behavior and improves response to social cues in autism and dysfunction of Oxytocin receptors as a risk factor in development of Autism. Oxytocin levels are reduced in those with chronic depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and in post traumatic stress disorder. (IsHak, et al. 2010).

Parents:
Anybody who has ever raised a child understands the inherently stressful nature of the experience. The challenge of parenting lies not so much in the actual experience, but rather in the stress-based parental reactions that are triggered during the process. Parenting causes many adults to experience chronic stress, anxiety, resentment, depression and anger, seemingly with no bona fide roots for the intense emotional experience. Yet, research from the field of trauma implies just the opposite. That in fact, parenting creates an unconscious playground from which the parent’s deepest, most sensitive experiences are brought back to life with oftentimes unexpected force and consequences (Post 2010).
Research has repeatedly implicated the neuropeptide oxytocin as one of the key hormones involved in parent-infant bonding in mammals, as well as in a range of social and affiliative behaviors (Gordon et al. 2010). As such, there is also a noted disruption of the oxytocin response in parents where depression and other psychological disorders may be present. Parents who have been taking oxytocin have reported a prolonged and definite experience of calm in the presence of their child, an absence of anxiety when witnessing negative behaviors and an increase in ability to respond logically and from an authentic emotional space.

**Children:**

The information being shared concerns off-label use of oxytocin. The use of oxytocin with children is not approved by the FDA nor has it been approved by the FDA and neither has what I am about to say.

In an article from *Biological Psychiatry*, Eric Hollander of Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, relates his study results on giving oxytocin to autistic adults. He found that it improves their ability to recognize emotions like happiness and anger in people's tone of voice, something autistic people struggle with. A single dose produced improvements lasting two weeks. Though Hollander claims to have only dispensed oxytocin to consenting adults, he believes that its effect on children might be even stronger. He's not alone.

“I’m absolutely convinced that we should study administering oxytocin when there is an early diagnosis of autism,” says Heinrich, “but it's difficult to get permission to administer to children” (Szalavitz 2008).

In Szalavitz, 2008, neuroeconomist, Paul Zak, adds: “We find in animal studies that if the mother neglects the baby, the number of oxytocin receptors atrophies.” Similarly, studies of monkeys raised without mothers find that they have lower oxytocin levels than monkeys reared normally. Children who suffer severe early neglect - for example, raised without individual attention in a bare orphanage - often have symptoms indistinguishable from those of autism. A 2005 study found that children who had spent the first few months or years of their lives in a Romanian orphanage had lower than normal...
oxytocin responses to contact with their adoptive mothers (*Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol 102, p 17237 as cited in Szalavitz 2008)

There are two important considerations to the above findings:

- The challenge to being able to have oxytocin prescribed for children is not for lack of safety, but rather from lack of research. Most pharmaceutical companies are able to work around this by providing extensive testing conducted on children. Psychiatric medication research is not conducted on children. Yet, even with the very well noted side effects relative to the minutia of positive therapeutic benefit, they are widely used on children. Furthermore, the off-label use of psychiatric medications for both children and adults is widely practiced fundamentally based on research conducted for other purposes which demonstrated therapeutic value in other areas. On the other hand, the study and use of oxytocin has been around since 1906. Although the study for off-label use is relatively new, there are still extensive studies documenting the harmless nature of oxytocin when taken sublingually comparative to the potentially positive therapeutic benefit.

- Psychotherapists specializing in the areas of trauma and abuse are very familiar with the aberrant effect stress and trauma has on the developing brain of the child. There are thousands of children from the foster care system, to adoptive placements, and group homes that have experienced the effects of maltreatment and abuse every bit as severe as Romanian orphans. A brief examination of the emotional and behavioral history, and it's manifestations for such children readily demonstrates that there are components of their brain not working effectively. The study of affect regulation provided the first inroads to this understanding. Yet, it is the greater and more significant understanding of oxytocin, the anti-stress hormone, that provide us the most direct insights for how to support such children into healing and growth. In the eloquent words of Susan Kuchinskas, “Love not only makes us happy; it makes us healthy too. By means of oxytocin, love heals.”
HOW MUCH SHOULD BE USED?

Again I reiterate that none of these statements have been approved by the FDA. I am only sharing information with you based on my own personal use of oxytocin and observations made of those taking it.

Research into the sublingual usage of oxytocin indicates that unlike other drugs, oxytocin is not more effective the higher the dosage in fact it’s just the opposite. Sublingual dosages as high as *400 IU have not proven to be any more effective than a 20 IU dosage. To date I have found that a 10 IU sublingual dosage twice per day is more than adequate for a sustained increase in well being and reduced stress throughout the day with no noted side effects. This has been effective for both adults and children who have diagnosable levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and other similar conditions.

I’m sure as with most things individual responses vary based on gender, age, weight, and psychological profile. Please consult your physician.

*The reference to this study can be found at www.oxytocinfactor.com in the FAQ section on safety.

HOW AND WHERE TO BUY OXYTOCIN?

There are a few products on the market supposedly containing oxytocin that are available to the public, both prescription and non-prescription. I’ll share them with you here:

First, let me say this is not an endorsement for any one product. You need to inform yourself about anything that you take personally and always consult with a physician. However, I will tell you that I have personally tried the oxytocin products noted here:

Belmar Pharmacy www.belmarpharmacy.com is a compounding pharmacy in Colorado that offers oxytocin tablets that can actually be absorbed through the gastrointestinal tract. They are able to do this through a patented absorption system. These tablets are pure oxytocin. After a single 10 unit dosage, I felt a sense of calm and relaxation for
nearly six hours. These tablets require a physician’s prescription. If you can get your
doctor to write a script (print off some of the articles and resources on
www.oxytocincentral.com for their information), you can order them from Belmar
and they’ll ship them directly to you. They can’t ship outside the country so if you live in
Canada or New Zealand, you must have them shipped to a friend in the US and then
have the friend ship them to you. These tablets are very effective. Taken appropriately,
they offer a multitude of benefits. I currently have about 15 clients taking them on an
experimental basis. So far, the results are very positive. This is not an inexpensive drug. A
one month supply of the 10 IU tablets will cost approximately $70 per month and is
not covered by insurance.

**ABC Nutriceuticals** [www.oxytocinfactor.com](http://www.oxytocinfactor.com) offer both a nasal spray and a
sublingual liquid which is absorbed by dropping the liquid under the tongue and holding
it there for a few moments. This is high grade oxytocin supplement engineered into an
absorption base that allows rapid uptake into the mucus membrane. It is referred to as Oxytocin-FX. Let me be up front
with you here: I am a paid consultant to this company. My role is
to provide researched evidence of the claims made and a sample population to test the initial formulations. I have taken this
product for several months and have several clients on it. Literally,
they have ALL experienced a tremendous benefit. It should go
without saying that I would not endorse an ineffective formulation nor would I
personally consume it for any length of time. My mom, family, and closest friends are
taking oxytocin and confirm its benefits.

It may also be of interested that I tried the other oxytocin formulations before deciding
to be a consultant to ABC. Their product is effective; it doesn’t require a prescription
and it’s less expensive than some other companies. It seemed like a no brainer. Real
oxytocin is not cheap. However, when compared to a wide range of anti-psychotics,
 depressants, and anxiety meds and their side effects, it seems a bargain. It is available in
a more than reasonable $39 cost for a thirty day supply when you are a member of the
ABC- Live Love Club which gives members $20 off each order. Otherwise
you can order it at $59 for a 30 day supply. Try it. [www.oxytocinfactor.com](http://www.oxytocinfactor.com)
**HBC Protocols** www.oxytocinaccelerator.com  Oxytocin Accelerator is a bit of a mystery to me. I've tried it, attempted to get as much information on it as possible and have about twenty clients on it as well. It's supposed to be a homeopathic formulation but also contains some amount of oxytocin which is an allopathic. Essentially, this means it can't truly be homeopathic because the two cannot be mixed. Their CEO did inform me that there are many drugs not listed as homeopathic which in fact are, but I'm not sure that really matters. The truth is, oxytocin is not homeopathic. On the other hand, HBC states that their version of Oxytocin is a plant-recombinant version, so I'm not certain what that means. If it's homeopathic or not... Honestly, who really cares? It either works or it doesn't. I've found it to be a nice little supplement. This formulation comes in a sublingual spray and contains a number of wellness, anti-stress nutritionals. It is effective in supporting stress on an everyday basis. It hasn't proven to be very effective for my clients with significant stress, anxiety, or depression, but for those needing a pick-me-up, it has been useful. Most of the ingredients are relatively harmless and it comes at a reasonable price of $59.95 for a three month supply.

**International Anti-Aging Systems** www.antiaging-systems.com  This company is selling 20 IU oxytocin trowches (sublingual dissolve in your mouth lozenges) without a prescription. This is also a powerful product and from my testing, it is legitimate. Break the trowches in half though. Only take a half, twice a day. 20 units at once is not necessary, if it is really absorbable in their formula. The side effect of too much oxytocin is sedation! As you will find, oxytocin is not cheap and neither is this product. The twenty-four day supply is almost $100 which seems to be about average.

**WHAT ABOUT A PRESCRIPTION?**

Even though it is rumored that oxytocin cannot be dispensed without a prescription, this may not be entirely true. According to personal conversations with the FDA, naturally occurring drugs like progesterone and oxytocin fall within a "gray" area. Meaning, because they are naturally occurring to the body they cannot, essentially, be considered illegal when obtained. As long you are not claiming to cure, diagnose, or medicate a specific medical condition, then the FDA claims to hold minimal jurisdiction.
WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS?

Several studies conducted to test the efficacy of oxytocin administered sublingually give us some excellent guidance. The reason is that they have used extremely high dosages of sublingual oxytocin with no reported side effects. Many of these studies used oral/sublingual dosages as high as 400 IU! To give you some perspective, 10IU delivered directly into the bloodstream is what’s commonly used to induce labor. However, because of delayed absorption and utilization through the mucus membrane, even dosages as high as 400 IU did not overwhelm the brain, and in fact one article stated that a lower dosage was actually more effective than the high dosage referenced in the study. You can find some referenced studies in the FAQ section of www.oxytocinfaactor.com

Please do understand that the study of oxytocin outside of the uses for labor and delivery is still very new, though exciting and very promising. I have only provided resources for acquiring sublingual oxytocin; that is all that I am willing to address here. In this context, oxytocin is safe, successful and has a good therapeutic index (Shyken and Petrie, 1995b).

All medicines may cause side effects, but many people have no, or minor, side effects. Check with your doctor if any of these most COMMON side effects persist or become bothersome when using Oxytocin. Side effects with oxytocin are not common.

Serious side effects include:

- an allergic reaction (shortness of breath; closing of the throat; hives; swelling of the lips, face, or tongue; rash; or fainting)
- difficulty urinating
- chest pain or irregular heart beat
- difficulty breathing
- confusion
- sudden weight gain or excessive swelling
- severe headache
- rash
- excessive vaginal bleeding; or
- seizures.
Other, less serious side effects may be more likely to occur.

Talk to your doctor if you experience

- redness or irritation at the injection site
- loss of appetite; or
- nausea or vomiting

Side effects other than those listed here may also occur. Talk to your doctor about any side effect that seems unusual or that is especially bothersome.

**WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM ITS USE?**

**Research findings about oxytocin:**

- Oxytocin improves social behaviors in autism. (Sirigu, 2010)
- Oxytocin reduces food cravings. (Kovacs, 1998)
- Oxytocin reduces sugar cravings. (Billings, 2006)
- Oxytocin calms. (Agren, 2002)
- Oxytocin increases sexual receptivity and counteracts impotence. (Pedersen, C.A., 2002)
- Oxytocin counteracts stress. (Legros, 2003)
- Oxytocin makes anti-depressants effective. (Uvnas-Moberg, 1999)
ADDITIONAL NATURAL WAYS TO INCREASE OXYTOCIN

In *Chemistry of Connection* (2009), author Susan Kuchinskas provides a list of natural ways to increase oxytocin. We suggest you implement these practices often for increased effectiveness.

- Offer a sweet kiss
- Share a warm hug
- Cuddle
- Make love
- Have an orgasm (alone or with someone else)
- Sing in a choir
- Give someone a neck rub
- Hold a baby
- Stroke a dog or cat
- Perform a generous act
- Pray or meditate
- Root for your team
CONCLUSIONS

For several years, I have been teaching about oxytocin, how it works in the brain, the implications for children, parents, adults and relationships, and how to create it naturally. Honestly, my introduction to oxytocin via Susan Kuchinskas has filled in some huge blank spots in my clinical practice and writings that I never even knew existed. I’ve been on the forefront of the practice implications from the Decade of the Brain for the past fifteen years. I now feel like I am standing on the precipice of the next revolution in human behavior and relationship. Ladies and Gentlemen, oxytocin is that important.

In the meantime, remember to breathe…it releases oxytocin!

Choose Love,

Bryan Post, Managing Editor
www.oxytocincentral.com

You can contact Bryan Post via his weekly oxytocin bulletin *The Oxytocin Underground*. Sign up at [www.oxytocincentral.com](http://www.oxytocincentral.com) and receive a free ($97 value) audio interview of him interviewing *Chemistry of Connection* author Susan Kuchinskas.
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