

Don't Lose Your Mind

Prevent age-related memory loss and keep your mind and memory sharp

Everyone has memory lapses from time to time. You might not remember where you left your wallet or keys or you may have forgotten someone's name. Most people don't worry about this when they're young, but as you grow older you may start to believe that something is going wrong with your brain. That's because we've been led to believe that memory naturally declines with age. This simply isn't true. Losing memory and cognitive power is not an inevitable part of the aging process. You are capable of producing new brain cells at any age, so there is no reason why your mental abilities have to decline as you grow older.

However, because a large percentage of people are experiencing memory loss as they grow older, it's wise to figure out why this is happening and how you can avoid being part of the statistics. Memory lapses that do not adversely affect a person's daily performance and ability to do what they want are not a cause for concern, but when there is a persistent, disabling decline in intellectual abilities it's time to take note. Memory loss that becomes so pervasive and severe that it disrupts a person's work, hobbies, social activities and family relationships, may be an early warning sign of dementia, Alzheimer's disease or some other disorder involving cognitive decline.

Understanding Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

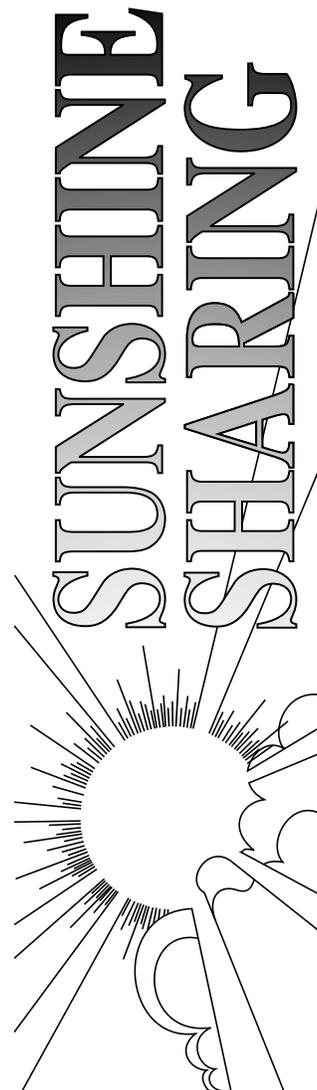
Dementia is a loss of cognitive and intellectual function, without the loss of perception. It is a syndrome, rather than a disease, which means it can have multiple causes. Symptoms include disorientation, impaired memory and judgment, and a loss of intellectual capacity.

Dementia is caused when brain cells get damaged. The damage can come from Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease, with Alzheimer's being the cause of between 50-70% of all cases. Dementia can also be caused by infections, cardiovascular disease, strokes and drug use.

Alzheimer's is a progressive, degenerative disease of the central nervous system. In Alzheimer's abnormal protein deposits form plaques in the brain, which causes neurons to lose their connections. There is no way to objectively diagnose Alzheimer's while a person is alive, but doctors are about 90% accurate in assessing through symptoms. According to the Alzheimer's Association, the people who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's typically die within four to eight years. This makes Alzheimer's the sixth leading cause of death in America according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

Alzheimer's generally develops in old age. It afflicts about one out of nine Americans over 65 and about one out of three over the age of 85. Currently about 5.3 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease and about 44 million people have it worldwide. It's most common in Western Europe and North America and rare in less developed countries, which suggests it is associated with Western diets and lifestyles.

Most importantly, since there is no cure for Alzheimer's, the best "cure" is to prevent it and other neurological disorders that can cause memory loss before they occur. So, that's why we're focusing on it in this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*.



Your guide to better health the natural way.

Vol. 28 No. 7

Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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Don't "Fry" Your Brain



There is a growing body of research that shows numerous mental problems are linked to inflammation of the brain. Inflammation is the immune system's first response to irritating substances, tissue damage or infection. When the immune system is activated by these factors, pro-inflammatory messengers signal white blood cells to enter the tissues to clean up the damage. Once this job is complete, anti-inflammatory messengers return tissues to their normal state.

Inflammation can become chronic when there are insufficient signals to turn inflammation off. This allows the immune system to be stuck in a hyperactive mode, which leads to destruction of tissues. This is what appears to happen in neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease, ADHD, autism and schizophrenia. Mood disorders like anxiety and depression have also been linked with chronic inflammation damaging tissues in the brain. Numerous other degenerative diseases like heart disease, cancer and arthritis are also linked to inflammatory processes, so if you want to be healthy as you age, you need to reduce chronic inflammation.

What Causes Chronic Inflammation?

Acute inflammation can be caused by anything which damages tissue—chemicals, infection, mechanical damage and so forth. Chronic inflammation appears to be linked to factors such as:

Fatty Acid Imbalances

Generally speaking, pro-inflammatory messengers are produced from omega-6 essential fatty acids and anti-inflammatory messengers come from omega-3 fatty acids. Most people's diets have too many omega-6 and too few omega-3 fatty acids, which appears to contribute to chronic inflammation. Furthermore, the brain contains a great deal of fat, with omega-3 essential fatty acids like EPA and DHA being the predominate fats in the brain.

So, if you want to keep your brain healthy, avoid vegetable oils and margarine, which are high in omega-6, and take an omega-3 fatty acid supplement like Super omega-3 EPA. Avoid fried foods and use good fats like coconut oil and organic butter.

Lack of Antioxidant Nutrients

Oxidative or free radical damage and inflammation are interlinked. The body needs oxygen to burn fuel, but it must also control the oxidative (burning) process carefully. This is done through nutrients like fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K), zinc, selenium, alpha lipoic acid, glutathione and coenzyme Q10. Fresh fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidant nutrients, which are primarily responsible for their bright colors.

Increasing your intake of brightly colored, fresh vegetables and fruits (and using antioxidant supplements) helps to reduce the oxidative damage that appears to be at the root of dementia in most cases, as well as other chronic and degenerative diseases.

Blood Sugar Imbalances

A major factor linked to brain inflammation is hyperinsulinemia, high levels of insulin in the blood caused by overconsumption of simple carbohydrates like refined sugars and grains. Blood sugar is extremely critical to nerve function because the nerve cells (neurons) primarily rely on blood sugar (glucose) for fuel.

Neurons are active, even when you sleep, because they have to regulate processes like respiration and circulation 24 hours a day. So, organs like the pancreas and liver work to keep levels of glucose stable in the blood to keep brain activity stable. If sugar levels in the blood are too low (hypoglycemia) the nervous system is starved for energy. You've experienced this when you haven't eaten in a while and feel tired, nervous or irritable.

If the sugar level gets too high, this is also problematic. High levels of sugar can react with proteins in tissues and damage them. So the body uses insulin to lower the sugar level when it gets too high. High insulin levels contribute to chronic inflammation and appear to be linked to the creation of beta-amyloid which forms the plaques found in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. The link between high insulin levels and Alzheimer's is so strong that some researchers are calling Alzheimer's Type III diabetes.

So, for the sake of your brain (and the rest of your body) it's best to avoid refined sugar, white flour and other simple carbohydrates. Instead use complex carbohydrates like fresh fruits and vegetables (which also supply antioxidants), along with moderate amounts of whole grains.

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Exercise Your Mind

It was once thought that a person's intelligence or IQ was fixed by genetics. We now know this simply isn't true. While genetics influence cognitive abilities, the very act of exercising your brain through engaging in new activities that use your body and senses in challenging ways helps to expand intelligence.

Dr. Lawrence Katz, an internationally recognized neurobiologist who helped to pioneer neuron regeneration research, says that mental decline is not usually from a loss brain cells. It's from a loss of connections between brain cells. As the number of dendrites (branches on neurons) declines, cognitive function and memory decline. He also found that by doing the right kinds of mental exercise you can grow new connections between nerve cells.

It is easy to fall into both behavioral and mental habits. But, the kinds of routines most people fall into as they age don't keep their brains challenged. As a result, they lose mental flexibility and experience a decline in their cognitive abilities.

So, shake up your daily routine by learning a new sport or starting a new hobby. Try to master a new field of study. Katz's book *Keep Your Brain Alive* can provide you with interesting exercises to keep your mind sharp.

Herbs to Help Your Mind and Memory

Our friends in the plant world can help protect and enhance memory in numerous ways. Some of the herbs that can be helpful include ginkgo, gotu kola, bacopa, rosemary, sage and Chinese club moss. Here's some information about each.

Ginkgo Biloba

A standardized extract of ginkgo has been extensively researched for its beneficial effects on the brain. **Ginkgo Biloba** improves alpha-wave activity in the brain and can help with problems like absentmindedness, confusion and dizziness. It has been shown to help prevent cognitive decline in the elderly.

Formulas combining ginkgo and hawthorn are popular in herbalism for the treatment of poor circulation, atherosclerosis, headaches, tinnitus, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Hawthorn improves blood circulation and cardiac function, making this blend helpful for protecting both the brain and the circulatory system from degenerative disease.

Ginkgo and Hawthorn is extremely safe for long term use and is an excellent general tonic for maintaining memory and cognitive function as you age. Take 1-2 capsules two to three times daily with a meal.

Gotu Kola

Widely used in Indian medicine as a nerve tonic in the treatment of mental and nervous ailments such as epilepsy, schizophrenia and memory loss, gotu kola also contains theobromine, which is presumed to help increase oxygen to the brain, thereby promoting greater mental capacity and vitality. Have you heard the saying, "An elephant never forgets?" Well, folk tradition suggests that it's because elephants like gotu kola.



Bacopa

Bacopa contains the memory boosting compounds bacopaside-A and bacopaside-B and well-known antioxidants that help protect the brain's memory centers from free radical damage. It increases the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which means it helps promote better memory, reaction times and learning during stressful periods. It also helps slow aging and degeneration of the brain.

Mind Max combines the benefits of ginkgo, gotu kola and bacopa with a form of magnesium known as magnesium l-threonate, which readily crosses the blood-brain barrier. Research shows it helps form new synapses in the brain and can help improve memory and general cognitive function.

Take 3 capsules of Mind Max at night before bed and 3 more in the morning before breakfast. The formula may cause sleepiness, drowsiness or headaches, especially if one is severely magnesium deficient. This is a temporary effect and should pass as one's levels of magnesium improve. If drowsiness is a problem, start only with the night time dose.

Rosemary

Rosemary is an antioxidant herb that protects the brain. The traditional phrase "rosemary for remembrance" shows its reputation as an herb to enhance mental clarity. It enhances acetylcholine, the neurotransmitter involved in memory. In fact, just smelling rosemary essential oil can help to clear and invigorate the mind.



Sage

The traditional use of this herb as a memory-enhancer is part of the reason a wise person is called a sage. Like rosemary, sage enhances acetylcholine production.

Both rosemary and sage are found in the herbal formula **HSN-W**, which is traditionally used for improving hair, skin and nails. It supplies natural silica and other minerals through the horsetail and dulse that are also part of this blend. HSN-W has benefits beyond its ability to provide greater structural strength to body tissues.

The silica in this formula plays a role in nerve function as well, being part of the nerve sheath (myelin sheath), which protects and insulates the nerve fibers. Use 1-2 capsules two to three times per day.

Chinese Club Moss

Chinese club moss has a history of use for treating memory loss, dementia and mental illness in China. Modern research has found a compound in the plant called huperzine A which inhibits the enzyme that breaks down acetylcholine, acetylcholinesterase. Inhibiting this enzyme increases acetylcholine in brain synapses.

Research into huperzine-A suggests that it may be helpful in Alzheimer's disease. In one US study 29 Alzheimer's patients were given huperzine-A, more than half seemed to show improvement. Research in China suggests that 60 percent of people with Alzheimer's disease show significant cognitive improvement when given huperzine-A.

Other research suggests this alkaloid from the Chinese club moss may help protect brain cells from certain types of toxic chemicals. It can also be helpful for dementia and for improving memory function in general.

Brain Protex contains huperzine-A, ginkgo, antioxidants like alpha lipoic acid and precursors to acetylcholine. It can help protect the brain from inflammation and may aid cognitive ability in dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Take 2 capsules twice daily.

Additional Help and Information

For more information about avoiding age related memory loss contact the person who gave you this newsletter. You can also consult the following resources:

The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products, 6th edition by Steven Horne and Kimberly Balas

Smart Food: Diet and Nutrition for Maximum Brain Power by Arthur Winter and Ruth Winter

The Case Against Sugar by Gary Taubes

"Nutritional Strategies to Combat Alzheimer's" by Liam Hawkins, *Life Extension Magazine*, March 2013

This issue of *Sunshine Sharing* is provided by:

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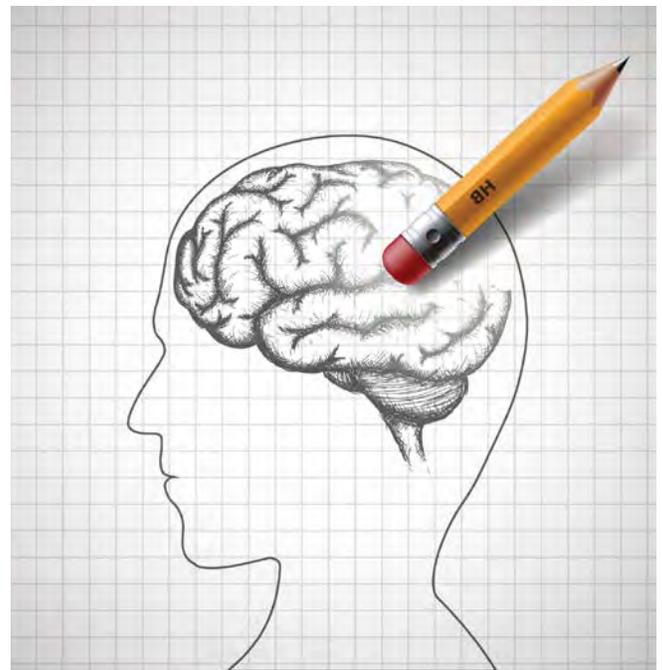


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There's No Reason to Lose Your Mind As You Age

Alzheimer's disease affects about one out of nine Americans over the age of 65. As the baby boomer generation ages, more and more people will be afflicted with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. It's estimated that more than 16 million Americans could have the disease by 2050. You shouldn't wait until you've losing your mind to try to protect it.

Learn about ways to keep your mind and memory sharp as you age in this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*.



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Nutrition to the Rescue

Various antioxidants show promise in helping protect brain cells from inflammatory damage. Here are a few to consider.

Curcumin

This brightly colored compound from turmeric has many brain protecting benefits. It can inhibit the formation of beta-amyloid, thus inhibiting the formation of brain plaques. It also appears to help the macrophages clean up amyloid cells in the brain. It enhances the function of mitochondria, the energy producing centers inside of the cell. Destruction of these mitochondria is also a factor in Alzheimer's and other neurological disorders. Curcumin may even be beneficial to people who already have Alzheimer's in slowing the progression of the disease.

Green Tea Extract

The polyphenols from green tea, especially one called EGCG, may also protect memory. EGCG blocks amyloid beta proteins from clumping together to form plaques. It also reduces mitochondrial dysfunction induced by amyloid beta in brain cells.

Magnesium

Magnesium modulates enzymes involved in amyloid beta production. When levels are low it favors amyloid beta build up, while high levels favor its breakdown. Magnesium also opposes the effect of excitotoxic neurotransmitters and aids the formation of new brain synapses. There is also a correlation between magnesium deficiency and people with Alzheimer's disease.

Other antioxidants and nutrients that may help protect the brain include **alpha lipoic acid**, **Grapine** (grape seed extract) and **Co-Q10**.