

Supplements and the Aging Brain



Maintaining a sharp mind can be the single most influential factor in everyday quality of life. Misplacing belongings, forgetting loved one's names and becoming socially distant can all be signs of cognitive impairment. Is this simply an inevitable part of aging? Are there ways to combat cognitive problems? To answer these questions, let's look at some of the factors known to contribute to the aging brain.

Did you know your brain does not have pain receptors? Unlike your joints, you don't feel pain when your brain is being attacked by inflammation. Diseases like Dementia, specifically Alzheimer's disease, are often marked by chronic inflammation. This long-term inflammation damages the sensitive brain tissue and can also exacerbate existing problems. To combat inflammation, make sure you're eating a diet rich in bright colored fruits and vegetables. These foods provide protective antioxidants that help shield the brain from damage. High quality Turmeric and Curcumin supplements are being studied heavily worldwide for their ability to fight inflammation and much more.

Glucose, often referred to as blood sugar, is the brain's primary source of energy. Insulin and the systems that assist it can be impaired, resulting in the brain not getting the glucose it needs to function. The nutrients Chromium, Magnesium and Vitamin D have all been implicated as having a positive effect on glucose metabolism. Recently, interest has focused on the only other known major source of energy for brain cells, ketone bodies. Ketone bodies are compounds produced from dietary fats by our liver and can serve as an alternative energy source when glucose levels are low. Coconut oil has become a popular choice for its high ketone potential, both as a supplement and culinary oil.

Nutrients critical to everyday health are often overlooked and yet are required for the brain to function normally. Although it's foolish to say certain nutrients are more important than others, two categories that do stand out are Omega fatty acids and B Vitamins. Omegas are a key component of a healthy brain, yet many people are deficient. These healthy fats can not only help regulate inflammation and support glucose transport, but also help facilitate communication between brain cells. B Vitamins are necessary for the production of numerous neurotransmitters and help our bodies turn food into energy. Since our bodies cannot retain B Vitamins, regular replenishment through diet and/or supplements is encouraged.

We have focused on three areas where supplements may help make a difference. As with any good health regiment, we never want to disregard lifestyle habits. Two great habits that can help keep the brain healthy are physical *and* mental exercise. Set goals to get your blood flowing with some form of exercise on a regular basis. Cardio, weight bearing and tai chi exercises are all wonderful, so find one that works for you. Crossword puzzles, Sudoku and social games help keep the brain in shape, so try to enjoy several every week. Remember to always discuss supplements and changes to your lifestyle with your healthcare professional. Whether small or large, commit to taking a step towards improving your health today!

By Tyler Giles of HealthWay Nutrition Center

For personalized, old-fashioned service with modern supplement expertise, HealthWay Nutrition Center welcomes your questions! Call us at 541-772-8659 or stop by 845 Medford Center, located within the Medford Center, near the corner of Biddle and Stevens St.