

REMEMBER WHEN ... ?

Staying Healthy with Dr. Aieta, N.D.



Dr. Aieta,

My father is turning 76 this month and is in relatively good health. It seems that over the past few years his memory has been declining though. His doctor tells us that he may be starting to get the early stages of senile dementia. Are there any natural treatments that may help slow down the progression of the dementia or even reverse it?

**Thanks,
David L.**

There are many things that can be done nutritionally to slow down the progression of and sometimes reverse age-related memory loss or dementia.

The first nutrient I always test for in any patient over the age of 50 is vitamin B-12. As we age, it becomes harder for us to absorb certain nutrients from our food, especially if our diets are poor or if we are taking medications that can impair nutrient absorption, like antacids or certain diabetic medications. A vitamin B-12 deficiency can cause mental decline, yet most doctors fail to test for it. B-12 injections are the preferred form of supplementation because it can bypass the digestive tract and can get right into the blood stream. I have seen countless elderly patients, as well as younger patients, notice dramatic improvements in their cognitive function and overall energy from a series of these injections.

I also recommend that patients supplement with adequate levels of other B vitamins as well. Research has shown that B vitamins and folic acid all play important

roles in mental function.

As far as herbs go, the most commonly talked about herb for improving memory is Ginkgo biloba. I have personally seen Ginkgo biloba work in numerous cases, along with other supplements, to improve memory. Ginkgo works to improve blood flow to the brain and improve cellular metabolism in the brain tissue. In one study, 112 elderly patients with age-related memory decline received 120 mg of Ginkgo biloba extract for one year. Significant improvements were noted in short term memory, vigilance and mood. I have found that improvements are typically noted after about three months of treatment.

Another natural treatment I will use for age-related memory loss is phosphatidylserine, which is a compound that occurs naturally in the brain and has been shown to enhance mental function. In one study, 40 individuals with senile dementia received 300 mg of this compound for 60 days. Significant improvements were noted in memory and in various other psychological symptoms.

Another naturally occurring substance that I typically recommend in conjunction with the phosphatidylserine is acetyl-L-carnitine. This substance also plays a role in brain function, and there are positive research studies out there backing its use for dementia.

Finally, I will always test patient's hormone levels, especially thyroid and testosterone levels in men. In one double-blind study with 32 men with low testosterone levels, replacement to normal levels resulted in dramatic improvements in memory and overall well being for the men treated.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board-certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease, using natural therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, spinal manipulation, clinical nutrition, and herbal medicine. If there is a specific topic you would like to see addressed in an upcoming column, you can e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information.

DON'T STRESS

Women's Fitness with Lisa Thomas

Go workout and leave your worries at the door. Get it all out of your head and recover a feeling of calmness and mental clarity.

It's time to get the most out of your workouts; a really good workout can make a big difference in your life. Make time to get to the gym. Make the choice to dedicate time to your mind, body and health.

Exercise is a valuable, natural way of releasing tension and stress. Stress has been linked to mental and emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and anger and physical illnesses because it weakens the immune system.

I believe it is important that we constantly work on reducing our stress to maintain our overall health. If we are not healthy, that just adds more stress to our life. Remember: While working out, leave your worries somewhere else and focus on your breath and the movement. The minutes you put into your workout should be positive and rewarding.

Exercise helps – even just taking a walk can make a difference. One 15- to 45-minute walk four days a week will help your body get rid of excess adrenaline and produce endorphins, a natural tranquilizer. Exercise gives you time away from the stressors.

Get out of your stressful environment and get outside to walk or go to your local gym.

Relax your breathing and move your

body. Mix up your workouts too with a balance of cardiovascular, resistance and stretching. You will not only feel better, you will also look better. A good workout will leave you feeling significantly better than before, it will be easier to stay present and centered in your body and you'll be much less prone to get lost in worry.

Exercise usually involves a change of scenery and a new link to new friends. Some people enjoy listening to an iPod while working out – they load it up with tunes and get into a workout zone. Others might like to socialize, which is fine as long as you keep moving the body and not just the mouth. Either way, keep moving and you will feel the difference.

Whatever your workout choice, take a moment to feel your body in motion and reconnect with yourself. Make a commitment to a healthier and happier you. Change your lifestyle to healthier habits; you'll feel better in everything you do.

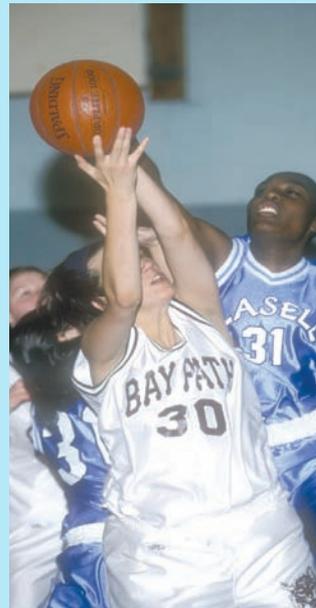
Keep clear of distractions; physical activity, itself, can take your mind off of your problems and redirect it on the activity at hand or get you into a calm Zen-like state.

I want all of you to be motivated and inspired. I want you to feel a sense of accomplishment in life, and from your training session, you can be focused and have fun while training.

So while your worries might still be waiting for you after your worry-free workout is through, you will be better-

suited to deal with them with a refreshed, clear mind.

Lisa Thomas is a personal trainer/fitness coach in the Greater Springfield area, as well as owner of Thomas Fitness Center and Fit Kidz of Massachusetts. Contact her at (413) 426-5543 or l.fitness@hotmail.com, or visit www.thomasfitnesscenter.com.



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