



Dear Doctors,

I am a 57 year old professional woman. I went through menopause 6 years ago. During this time I used natural therapies to get over the symptoms successfully, but know I have another problem that may or may not be related. Lately I have had memory lapses and forgetfulness. I just don't feel like myself many days. I would like to know what I could do to improve my situation.
PN, Jupiter

Dear PN,

There is quite a bit you can do to improve memory and your cognitive skills. The best approach is a comprehensive plan involving supplementation, mental and physical exercise plus having your hormones evaluated and adjusted if necessary. For supplementation we suggest Acetyl-L-Carnitine, GlyceroPhosphoCholine, and Phosphatidyl-Serine. Acetyl-L-Carnitine nourishes the brain, GlyceroPhosphoCholine enhances mental focus and PhosphatidylSerine helps maintain a proper balance of minerals in tissues and to stimulate certain enzymes involved in energy metabolism. You should also take 5-6 of the large omega-3 oil gels per day. Omega-3 oil is preferred by the body for use in formation of nerve and brain tissue.

There was a 2006 study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine which showed that lower levels of physical performance were associated with an increased risk of dementia and attention deficit. The study suggested that poor physical function may precede the onset of dementia and attention deficit and higher levels of physical function may be associated with a delayed onset. So physical exercise can improve and maintain cognitive function. Exercise regularly and you can stay sharp mentally!

One of the biggest groups buying those little Nintendo hand-held game systems is senior citizens. Do you find that hard to believe? Not if you know that there were games invented for research that were shown to improve mental function. Those games are available in this country now and if used daily, they can train your mind to stay sharp. They offer a change of pace from traditional games which do the same like chess, sudoku and crossword puzzles. I went to a place called Gamestop in Stuart where Stephanie and Ren, two very helpful women who work there, showed me games such as Brain Age, Big Brain Academy and Flash Focus that you play on the Nintendo DS game system. They were entertaining and stimulating.

You should have your hormone levels checked as well as your thyroid. Many times imbalances of your hormone levels can lead to poor memory and thinking. Thyroid imbalances can also do this especially if you are hypothyroid which means that your thyroid is underperforming which will also show up as fatigue and weight gain. If your hormone levels are fine and you experience unexplained weight gain, some chronic knee and low back pain, water retention, digestive problems like gas and bloating, and "brain fog" it could be that your digestive system is out of balance. In Chinese medicine we say that your spleen qi(*chee*) is out of balance. Some acupuncture, Chinese herbs and simple dietary changes can turn that around. Hope this is of use to you.

Yours in Health,
Dr. Ervolino

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