



# hanover healthfoods

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## The Big Brain Issue



with Alzheimer's, with an Oxford University study showing that it may help prevent the condition. It is important for serotonin production in the brain, which is our 'feel good' chemical and could explain its potential use in those who suffer from depression. It also crosses the blood-brain barrier, directly 'feeding' the brain. If supplementing with this vitamin, go for Methylfolate. This is the active form as opposed to the synthetic form, Folic Acid, and is more easily used by the body.

The brain is probably the most complex organ in our body, being made up of over 100 billion nerve cells. A healthy brain is what makes us individual but is susceptible to damage and deterioration if not looked after, like any other part of the body. So what remedies are good to maintain a healthy brain?

### Vitamins B6, B12, Folic Acid and NAC

This specific combination can help lower Homocysteine levels – an aggressive amino acid found in our blood. Studies have shown elevated Homocysteine can increase risk of arterial plaque formations – leading to blocked arteries, reduced blood flow to the brain and cell damage or death. This combination of B vitamins can convert Homocysteine to the antioxidant amino, Glutathione, which can help protect brain cells. Interestingly, post-mortem results of patients with Parkinson's show a decreased level of Glutathione present in the brain, indicating oxidative stress may be a factor. In fact a recent study into NAC (N-Acetyl Cysteine) has proved promising in raising Glutathione levels. Although this involved intravenous NAC, it could pave the way for research into the effects of oral NAC on glutathione levels.

Folic Acid is showing promise in helping

Omega 3 is one of the top nutrients for boosting brain power, memory and learning. Primarily from oily fish it is made up of two fatty acids called EPA and DHA. Brain fats are mostly made up of DHA. Omega 3 helps maintain healthy brain cells and allows neurons in the brain to communicate with each other properly. As an added benefit EPA is also good for cardiovascular health and this could potentially be good for your brain too, making sure circulation to the brain is tip top. It is common for fish oil to be taken by students to improve memory and concentration. Studies are suggesting low amounts of DHA in the brain could be a factor in developing Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Ginkgo Biloba is a herbal remedy known as the number one remedy for memory and has been traditionally used in this way. It works by improving circulation to the brain and increasing the rate at which information is transferred in the nerve cells. Ginkgo also stimulates choline uptake (the precursor of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine) by the brain and inhibits the reduction of choline

*(continued overleaf)*

## DEFINING: Remember This?

One of the most common signs of Age Related Cognitive Decline is forgetting the small things, like where you put your keys or forgetting a conversation you recently had. Other symptoms can include losing concentration easily or noticing your attention span shortening. Whilst slow cognitive decline is considered a natural part of the ageing process, it could be a sign of the start of something more serious such as Alzheimer's so it is important to make sure that you are always properly diagnosed.



It can be distressing and frustrating to have a 'senior moment' but before jumping to conclusions, issues in memory can be linked to other causes such as depression and stress, side effects from drugs and poor eating habits. Drastic life changes such as the death of a loved one can leave a person feeling confused and forgetful also. If you are concerned about your memory there are various things you can do to maintain a good brain. Keeping the mind stimulated is very important, learning new tasks and doing puzzles or reading can all help. Regular daytime exercise can get you out and about, improve blood flow to the brain and improve mood.

As time passes we are attacked by free radicals which effectively cause our cells to 'rust' or go rancid. The brain is no different and needs to be looked after, especially with the accumulation of free radical damage. Supplement wise, Ginkgo Biloba is a great place to start. This can improve blood flow and circulation to the brain, keep cells healthy

and has a long history of being used for memory. A good Fish Oil supplement will help maintain healthy cell membranes and has been shown to help with memory and learning. Coconut Oil is all the rage at the moment with regards to memory and cognitive ability although very little research has yet been done on it. In people with Alzheimer's and memory loss, the ability to use glucose for energy is impaired. Fats in Coconut Oil are metabolised without insulin and supply energy to the brain differently from glucose.

Diet wise, avoiding bad trans-fats and consuming oily fish can help maintain good cardiovascular health, allowing good circulation to the brain. Folate-rich foods such as spinach, broccoli, cauliflower and frozen peas should be included to boost brain health. Fruits and vegetables are also very important for their antioxidant properties, helping to combat the free radicals that can damage the neurons in the brain.

Paul, Newslettermeister



**Saffron** is derived from the flower *Crocus Sativa*. Most of us are familiar with Saffron for its use in cooking and its bright colour but it has been recently shown to help with depression. It has been traditionally used in Persian medicine for centuries for helping to increase mood and is thought to be down to its serotonin boosting properties. The research into Saffron is in its infancy but early research indicates around 30mg is needed to get results comparable to Prozac. A dose of 30mg is 10 of the Saffron strands.

receptors. It also contains high levels of flavonoids and terpenoids – antioxidants which can protect against neuron damage.

**Phosphatidyl Serine** is an important phospholipid derived from lecithin, of which there is a large concentration in the brain. It enhances cell membrane fluidity, and can increase the amount of acetylcholine receptors in the brain. This can maintain good brain cell health by keeping fatty acids in the brain and ensuring good 'signalling' within the brain. Clinical trials have shown that Phosphatidyl Serine (PS) can help with cognitive functioning, most notably in those conditions that relate to age including memory, concentration and learning. Taking lecithin daily provides some PS as well as other phospholipids such as choline.

**Viridian Cognitive Complex** deserves a special mention as it contains many neuro-protective nutrients in one product. It is targeted to prevent oxidative damage and help with transferring neuronal information between cells. It contains Alpha Lipoic Acid which can help with cellular energy and is a potent antioxidant which is soluble in both water and fats making it particularly protective for the brain. Acetyl-L-Carnitine is also a good antioxidant and can help phospholipid synthesis. Co-enzyme Q10 is also present to help with antioxidant levels and providing energy to the brain. This product also contains Theanine to help with relaxation and clarity, as well as some Phosphatidyl Serine. If you want to try one product for brain health, Viridian Cognitive Complex is the ideal starting point.

Paul, 6 Years At Hanover Healthfoods