

Unlock the Secrets to a Sharper Mind

By: Susan Grandgeorge, FDN-P

Many people accept cognitive loss as a normal part of aging. But the truth is, “senior moments” — regardless of your age — are signs that your brain and body need additional support. Alzheimer’s — and cognitive loss in general — is on the rise. The Alzheimer’s Association estimates that more than 6 million Americans have Alzheimer’s disease.

Dementia is a general term for diminished mental ability that is serious enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer’s, in comparison, is a degenerative brain disease that involves complex changes and cell death within the brain. It makes up 60–80% of dementia cases.

Optimal cognitive function depends on multiple factors, including efficient detoxification of toxins, anti-inflammatory therapies, and maximum antioxidant activity. Impairments in these areas deprive the brain of nutrition, fuel neuroinflammation, damaging, neurons & brain

cells. Learn to improve these underlying causes of cognitive decline with the following therapies.

- **Follow an anti-inflammatory diet.**

A nutrient-dense diet & healthy digestion are the core of vitality. Nutrition affects every system—especially the brain. Traditional Chinese Medicine, associates cognitive power with strong digestion. Researchers find an abundance of neuropeptides (molecules that transmit brain signals) in the gastrointestinal tract and show that beneficial bacteria in our GI tracts influence brain health, mood, & more.

Neuroinflammation plays a significant role in brain degeneration & of all factors effecting inflammation, diet leads. Anti-inflammatory foods—green vegetables, legumes, dark fruits & berries along with healthy fats in avocado, olive oil, coconut oil and fatty fish, support brain health & cognitive function. On the other hand, junk foods high in refined sugars, carbs, and trans-fats fuel inflammation & impair cognitive function. Elevated

blood sugar from an unhealthy diet — is a major risk factor in dementia & cognitive decline.

In addition to a nutrient dense, anti-inflammatory diet, certain herbs and nutrients - cardamom, pomegranate, cinnamon, galangal, chromium, & zinc- support digestion, nutrient absorption, & reduce inflammation.

- **Heavy Metals, mold, other toxins must go.**

The human brain is particularly vulnerable to a wide range of toxins. Big culprits are lead, cadmium, & mercury, that show up in our food, water & air. Studies show that living in an area with high air pollution (near coal burning facilities) accelerates cognitive decline. The body has natural detox mechanisms, but it did not evolve to handle the amount of toxin exposure we face today. Reducing the intake of these is essential. To us an analogy: stop adding water to the overflowing tub before attempting to unclog the drain. To reduce intake, drink clean water from non-plastic containers. Water filters such as an undercounter reverse osmosis or a countertop Berkey water filter (see

other recommended brands on EWG.org) will greatly reduce toxins. A whole house water filter is ideal. Aquasana is a highly rated system. Home water can be tested using a company called Tap Score. Eating organic eliminates many toxins. Families with tested high levels of glyphosate (in Roundup) in their blood, completely reduced these levels in two weeks of eating an all-organic diet. Air purifiers, at least for the bedroom, will reduce the intake of air pollutants. Two reputable brands are Air Doctor & IQ Air. Eat non-packaged foods. Toxins come not only in the chemical ingredients of packaged foods but in the packaging itself! (Microwavable popcorn bags are a big culprit). Dark greens, richly colored fruits & veggies in the produce section not only do not put toxins in, but they are antioxidants, reducing inflammation & helping to detoxify the body.

- **Optimize detoxification pathways.**

Once effort to reduce intake of toxins is engaged, fully utilizing the detoxification pathways is required. These pathways encompass breath, sweat & both urine & stool elimination. So the

more clean water consumed, the more urine is produced, the more toxins are excreted. Sweat is a good thing! Exercise induces sweat, oxygenates the cells, drains the lymph glands, supports more regular elimination & increases neural connections in the body. Shoot for 30 minutes at least five days a week. Saunas also are beneficial for sweat & stress control. Yoga, Tai Chi & meditation both increase oxygen to the body & calm inflammation. A high fiber diet utilizes that stool pathway to pull the toxins out. Two stools a day is optimal. Any day that goes by without elimination initiates the fermenting (rotting) of food in the digestive tract. Nice, huh? Due to our standard American diet lifestyle, it is difficult to get the level of fiber needed. Run your own experiment. Write down what you eat in a day & check with Alexa on the fiber content. The goal is 30-35 grams/day. You'll be surprised.

So many factors contribute to better brain health. The best part of it is - all of the same efforts work to enhance better overall health. Conclusion: the efforts are more than worthwhile.

Above taken from information in an eBook written by Dr. Isaac Eliaz, MD, MS, Lac. Dr Eliaz has been a pioneer in integrative medicine since the early 1980s, focusing on cancer, immune health, detoxification, and mind-body medicine. He's a respected clinician, researcher, author, and educator. He is the author of [The Survival Paradox](#), founder and Medical Director of [Amitabha Medical Clinic and Healing Center](#) in Santa Rosa, California.