

## Practical Preventable Medicine



### Where is my mind?

#### Memory and Cognitive Decline.

Age onset dementia, short term memory loss and post-traumatic stress are all different forms of mental functioning that can effect our perceptions of ourselves and effect our self-confidence. We all know that, save for severe trauma, most of us will always know how to ride a bike, swim or drive a car (procedural memory). So why is it that other areas of our brains seem to decline and how do we reduce those effects? These questions are constantly being researched by science and new research on the complementary medicine arena has plenty to offer.

Procedural memory is stored in the cerebellum, or 'little brain' that is quite ancient in evolutionary terms whilst our frontal lobe, where decision making, reason and 'personality' reside is quite 'new'. When we age it's this area we notice that our memory is not what it used to be, and while we cannot turn back the clock, there is much we can do to slow this cognitive decline as well as boost our mental processing that has been affected by stress as many of us up here have, and help our children in their studies while we are at it!!

In Chinese Medicine that 'Heart Houses the Mind' which is to say that the heart is the organ that governs the mind. This is why heart surgery often results in memory loss, a fact not yet understood by Western medicine, and also very interestingly, herbs and supplements that assist in memory also are very good for the heart too. The heart also governs sorrow and joy.

Omega 3 fatty acids, which are plentiful in fish oil are well researched and known to assist in mood stabilization (especially in children) memory function, slowing down cognitive decline ... and they are good for the heart itself! In fact it has been suggested by the Heart Foundation that fish oil be added to the PBS to assist in it being prescribed by G.P.'s. You can course eat fish like sardines and get all the other goodies fish give 2-3 x per week....

Other well-researched items include **Red Ginseng** which is excellent for memory with trials showing improvements in Alzheimer's disease and Dementia. It is also great for energy, circulation and endurance as well as heart and lungs.

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Like Ginseng **Brahmi** has been used for centuries , and trials have shown it improves learning and memory while decreasing anxiety and depression (there's that heart again) while **Ginkgo Biloba** is quite well known and also improves circulation, which is why Chinese Medicine uses it for strokes and wheezing. **Green Tea** is also well accepted as being effective in reducing cognitive impairment due to its capacity for anti-oxidization and metal-chelating (attaching to and eliminating heavy metals such as lead). Green Tea is also anti-inflammatory and has neuro-protective qualities which and is always served hot at my clinic! Just 3-4 cups per week is all you need!

**Co-Enzyme Q10** is showing great results both in protecting brain cells and again is good for heart muscle, interestingly trial's also showed lessening of depression symptoms. As always, consult a health professional before beginning taking herbal supplements.

Fresh air, exercise, laughter and music are all important too. So eat well and have fun and stay sharp.

**Until next time, stay well**

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