



NATUROPATHIC WISDOM NOTES

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Choose your rut carefully. You'll be in it for the next ten miles.

Road sign in Upstate New York

It is hard to begin new habits, but when people visit a naturopathic physician for the first time they are ready to choose a "new rut"! My new website will be up and running soon to make it easier for you to navigate and do research to make it easier for you to establish new habits. As always the recipes are updated every few months. This month look for **Buffalo Stew, Spinach and Goat Cheese** and **Shepherd's Pie** (topped with cauliflower and potatoes!) Thank you for visiting our local MLA Claire Trevena and presenting to her our **Four Point Plan** in support of the Naturopathic profession. We have a new staff member Bonnie Fulton, who will be assisting myself and Hayley in our on going effort to provide you with "good" medical care. Haley wanted her hours reduced to allow more time with her family. Finally, I was awarded the Verna Hunt award at the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors AGM in Toronto, Oct 2005. This award is given yearly, to a naturopathic physician for the work they do on behalf of the profession nationally. Be well!

Brain Health or Functional Neuroprotective Therapy

The most feared consequence of aging is losing one's mind. If you think you are losing a bit of your memory, getting more irritable and feel you have a slight decline in mental ability, don't ignore it and brush it off to "normal for your age" concept. This is the time to stop and reverse this decline with neuroprotective nutrients. The longer you wait the more irreversible are the changes that develop. It is certain that during menopause women go through a "mental pause" where they cannot scare up words or names at a moments notice but they can at 3am! This phase usually passes and if it doesn't then take notice.

Can brain nutrients really alter our brain chemistry, prevent memory loss, and even make us smarter? Can we prevent strokes, Alzheimer's Disease (AD) and mental illness? What about preventing Parkinsons Disease (PD) and other neurological diseases such as MS (Multiple Sclerosis) and ALS (Lou Gehrigs Disease)? What we are really talking about here is **inflammation** of the brain. What happens when other tissues are inflamed? They swell, turn red and they hurt. But when the brain is inflamed you don't feel this same response, instead there is a **decrease of function**. The functional medicine approach to brain health is to lower the level of inflammation in the brain and nervous system to **improve function**.

The goal of neuroprotective therapy is six fold:

1. to lessen oxidative stress
2. to improve mitochondrial function
3. to reduce exposure to toxins
4. to reduce inflammation
5. balance the hormones of stress
6. provide brain nutrients

Sound familiar? This approach will not only reduce inflammation of the nervous system but the other body systems as well including the cardiovascular, digestive and endocrine systems.

Lessen Oxidative Stress: Antioxidants such as Vitamin A, C, E, carotenes, lycopene and NAC (N-Acetyl Cysteine), quench chemically active oxygen species that will generate inflammation in the mitochondria. Of these Vitamin E is the most useful. (If you have stopped taking vitamin E due to the news reports over the last year, contact our office for a copy of my retorts!) Vitamin E in high doses can slow the progress of AD and may even delay onset. If taken in high enough dosages in early stage AD it is very effective. Don't forget a diet high in fruits and vegetables is also high in anti-oxidants especially if they are organic.

Mitochondrial Enhancement: Mitochondria are the main energy engines of each cell in the body. Nutrients such as CoQ10, lipoic acid, N Acetyl Carnitine enhance the mitochondrial health. Lower homocysteine (a mitochondrial toxin) with folic acid and B12 and get off statin drugs if possible because they reduce CoQ10. Don't forget that most antacid medications reduce the absorption of B12!

Lower Exposure to Toxins: Ingest a clean organic diet low in sugar, avoid aspartame and MSG, reduce chemical exposure in the work place and the home, chelate mercury, lead and cadmium using nutrients such as chlorella, spirulina and cilantro; certain SSRI's increase risk of PD, improve detoxification pathways in the liver with NAC, selenium, resveratrol, cruciferous vegetables, folic acid and sulphur rich amino acids and methionine and cysteine found in eggs, garlic and onions.

Lower Inflammation: EPA, DHA (are essential fatty acids, EFA's, found in fish oils), natural COX II inhibitors such as resveratrol, niacinamide (not niacin), and NAC all inhibit the inflammatory pathway. Niacinamide is also important for mitochondrial energy production and reduces brain damage in cases of ischemia.

Balance the Hormones of Stress: Cortisol is the main hormone of stress. If cortisol is chronically elevated due to stresses of any kind, this contributes to inflammation in the body increasing neuronal sensitivity to toxins and ischemia. It can also result in elevated blood sugar due to insulin resistance impairing glucose transport. Sustained elevated blood levels of glucose contribute to advanced glycation end products (AGEs) or the "baked bread crust" phenomenon. This hardening of proteins of the cell wall cause irreversible oxidative damage to the cells of the nervous system. This results in the complications seen in diabetes: kidney disease, visual impairments, circulatory diseases and amyloid accumulations seen in AD. Nutrients important for keeping serum blood sugars at 4.8-5.1 include: chromium, fiber,

vanadium, magnesium, anti-oxidants and EFA's. Some neurological diseases are genetic but remember that **gene expression can be altered with nutrition** so these protocols are important in these cases as well.

Brain Nutrients:

Ginkgo Biloba: According to Dr. Dharma Singh Khalsa M.D. author of Brain Longevity www.wholehealthmd.com ginkgo is the second most important ingredient for brain health second to Vitamin E. It increases blood flow to the brain allowing nutrients to enter brain cells more easily and support the function of neurotransmitters. It also scavenges free radicals, improves the retention of learning with profound effects on recall and short term memory, and is effective with AD patients within only 6 months of treatment! In fact Ginkgo in a 2003 study indicates that the response rate was better for mild to moderate AD, than for the five drugs now prescribed. In fact the evidence indicates that there is only one chance in ten that the prescription drugs may work and they may also cause diarrhea and other adverse effects.

CoQ10: This neuroprotective agent is found naturally in mitochondria and is essential to energy production in all our cells and an important anti-oxidant to reduce inflammation of the nervous system.

B12, Folic acid and B6: these keep homocysteine metabolism normal as homocysteine is a toxin for the mitochondria. This protein found in the blood is easily tested for and if it is at 14 or higher double the risk of AD. Optimal levels are 5-6. In years gone by if a teenager died of a stroke it was due to a genetic elevation of homocysteine. These days it is due to street drugs increasing neuro-inflammation. In Parkinson's patients who are taking CoQ10 and Levodopa, they may not FEEL any better due to the drug, but they have a 40% reduction in their decline with the disease. (The incidence of stroke is increased 42% with elevated homocysteine).

Phosphatidyl Serine: (PS) is a fat derived from soy lecithin that improves attention, concentration, mood and short term memory. It stimulates neurotransmitter release, activates transport of nutrients across the cell membrane and increases the energy production of brain cells.

Acetyl-L-Carnitine drives nerve cell metabolism in the mitochondria and it is a precursor to acetylcholine,

Resveratrol: this is a polyphenol found in the skins of red grapes and other plants that crosses the blood brain barrier to protect the brain directly. It is a potent anti-oxidant, makes platelets less sticky (important to prevent strokes), anti-oxidant for lipids (which are highly concentrated in brain tissue), induces healthy blood flow to the brain, and induces phase II detoxification pathway in the liver.

R Lipoic acid: This universal anti-oxidant extends the life of other anti-oxidants such as Vitamin C,E and CoQ10. It chelates iron and copper preventing them from forming free radicals and AGE's. It protects the mitochondria, improves insulin sensitivity and lowers serum blood glucose.

Vinpocetine: A phytonutrient found in periwinkle enhances circulation to the brain and increases delivery of oxygen and glucose to the brain especially important following a stroke as it may prevent further damage.

L-Carnosine: it prevents the deposition of amyloid which is the hallmark of AD and it chelates heavy metals which are a common part of the cause of many brain disorders.

DMAE(2-dimethylamino-ethanol): This is a precursor to choline and to acetylcholine, the main neurotransmitter in the brain. It has been studied to be useful for memory loss associated with aging,

senile dementia and AD.

Bacopa: A traditional Ayurvedic nerve tonic used to improve intelligence, memory and concentration. It is anti-oxidant, anti-seizure, anti-inflammatory, anti-anxiety, and is neuroprotective.

DHA/EPA (essential omega three fatty acids: docosahexaenoic and eicosapentaenoic acids): Brain health starts in utero. If pregnant women ingest adequate DHA found in fish oils such as cod liver oil, not only are the mother's smarter during pregnancy and breast feeding but the babes are too! Both the motor and visual skills of the infants were improved by ingesting DHA through the breast milk (about 60mg DHA per day) from mothers who ingest DHA in the form of fish oils. Cod liver oil prevents the incidence of type 1 diabetes and babes sleep better as well. Fish oils significantly reduce the incidence of stroke by making the platelets less sticky in men and women and does NOT increase the risk of hemorrhagic or bleeding stroke. DHA and EPA lowers triglycerides decreasing the glycosylation of brain tissue (AGEs). People with depression have lower levels of omega 3 fatty acids in their serum and in severe cases high doses of EPA can prevent suicidal ideation. (According to Dr. Catherine Willner M.D. neurologist. it can take two years for these EFA's to be incorporated into the cell walls of brain tissues, so be patient!) Fish oils improve general mental health and mood stabilization. Alzheimer's Disease is found twice as frequently in those with lower DHA blood levels.

When searching out these remedies it is important to consider that the one you choose closely matches those used in the clinical trials. This is called "phytoequivalence". I recommend the brain cocktail Orthomind by AOR which may contain many of these nutrients.

I hope you see that the brain is connected to the gut, is connected to the immune system in a "web" of interaction and if you take a cocktail of the above nutrients you will also lessen your chances of a "cytokine or inflammatory storm" that they predict may be the major cause of death due to the impending flu pandemic!

Other lifestyle recommendations to maintain healthy neurons include: stimulate your brain forever, exercise regularly, engage in daily social activities, meditation, yoga, sound sleep and vivid dreaming, emotional stability and expression, regular sexual activity and optimal nutrition including eating less.

References: Available on request

Recommended Reading: Brain Recovery by Dr. David Perlmutter
Brain Longevity by Dr. Khalsa

New at the Office

Influenzinum 2005/2006. Homeopathic remedy taken once per week for five weeks every fall to prevent the incidence of the current flu outbreak, for those who want to avoid the vaccine.

Remedies for Sale

For the first time we are offering some of our dispensary items for your friends and family who are NOT patients. The order sheet is on the website or available from Hayley. Some restrictions apply, see order sheet for details.

New Detoxification Program

Are you having trouble getting to Dr. Pincott's 1-2 week Rejuvenation Program? HEEL is a company that sells a simple program that is composed of three homeopathic remedies that are taken in drop form in water for 3-4 weeks with no diet changes required. These remedies detoxify the lymph, liver and kidney. They do NOT flush the bowel like the other program. Ask Dr. Pincott for more details.

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