Top 10 Nutrition / Lifestyle Strategies to Help Prevent Alzheimer’s (Part 2)

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As mentioned in part 1 of this article [Aug. 26 issue], Alzheimer’s disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the U.S. and the only cause of death among the top 10 for which medical treatments are unable to prevent or slow its progression. In recent years, many studies suggest specific dietary and supplementation practices influence the development of Alzheimer’s. This article continues with the top 10 lifestyle recommendations for baby boomers and young senior patients to help prevent Alzheimer’s disease.

6. Make Melatonin Matter

After age 40, take a melatonin supplement one hour before bedtime. By age 40, melatonin secretion rates from the pineal gland in the brain have declined significantly. Melatonin is a vital brain antioxidant, sleep inducer and immune modulator. Low melatonin levels are linked to cognitive impairment and Alzheimer’s disease. Studies show that providing cognitively impaired patients with melatonin supplements blocks the transition to Alzheimer’s disease in a high percentage of cases. No medical treatment is available that shows a similar effect.22-29

I recommend that individuals over age 40 take a supplement containing the following: melatonin – 500 mcg; 5 HTP – 10 mg; GABA – 25 mg; and Bacopa monnieri – 15 mg. Take one hour before bedtime based on the dosage that enables one to fall asleep, remain asleep through the night, and wake up refreshed in the morning. Start with the minimum and increase the dosage until arriving at the ideal dosage. As one gets older, the dosage usually increases due to the steady decline in melatonin secretion with advancing age.

7. Preserve the Memory Chemical
After age 55, take a supplement each day that helps preserve brain levels of the memory chemical, acetylcholine. After 55, brain synthesis of acetylcholine declines. Low levels of acetylcholine are a hallmark feature of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. There are no drugs that increase brain synthesis of acetylcholine; only supplements have been shown to do this. 30-60

After age 55 I recommend that patients take a supplement each day containing CDP-choline, phosphatidylserine, *Bacopa monnieri* and huperzine A.

8. Don’t Damage the Brain

Avoid known brain-damaging substances. For example, don’t drink alcohol. Alcohol kills brain cells. If you drink alcohol, have no more than three drinks per week. Don’t smoke. Free radicals in cigarette smoke cause brain oxidation and increase the risk of cerebrovascular disease. Don’t use recreational drugs, either, as many (including marijuana) are known to cause brain damage. 61

9. Keep Your Mind Sharp

Keep your brain active by learning a new activity or new language. Examples include learning a musical instrument, taking dance lessons, playing ping-pong (mind-body activity), and learning a new skill or subject that is outside of your usual skill set, career endeavour, or leisure-time hobbies. This helps to carve new brain circuits, which keep the brain young.

It may interest you to know that individuals with lower education have higher rates of Alzheimer’s disease. Use your brain power throughout all of adult life, and continue to learn things outside of your usual frame of
reference. This is vital to preserving brain health.61

10. Protect Your Head

Finally, avoid head injuries by wearing a helmet when cycling, skiing, rollerblading etc., and avoiding high-risk head injury activities.61

References


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