

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



October, 2008

Alzheimer's and Memory Loss



Names. House keys. Where we parked the car.

We all forget things at times. But at what point is memory loss an indication that something more serious is happening?

While many assume the worst when they fail to remember simple things, memory lapses can be caused by stress, Vitamin B-12 deficiency or even a combination of prescription drugs.

“When your memory loss begins affecting the quality of your life, when it becomes a difficulty in how you live your life, that’s when it needs to be addressed,” says the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America.

People aren’t exactly eager to talk about the problem, however, according to a recent study by the Metlife Mature Market Institute.

The study, conducted in collaboration with the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America looked at people who attended a voluntary, free memory screening during National Memory Screening Day. Of those surveyed, 73% had memory concerns, but only 24% of that group shared those feelings with a doctor.

That reluctance likely has to do with the lack of a cure for Alzheimer’s, which affects an estimated one in ten people over 65 and nearly 50% of those over 85.

“There’s still a stigma with the

disease,” says one expert “People ask, ‘Do I lose my ability to drive? What will happen to my insurability?’ These are all legitimate concerns.”

Delaying diagnosis can backfire, however, since the treatments available, which can only offset the progression of symptoms, tend to be most effective in the early stages of the disease.

People should consider going to the doctor for an evaluation when memory loss is accompanied by problems in one or more areas of cognitive ability such as orientation, language skills, visual spatial skills and attention. Other red flags

(Over)



Benefits Corner

NextRx OTC drugs

NextRx has a website (nextrxotc.com) available where members can shop for OTC drugs (vitamins, allergy, cough, cold etc.) at low cost and have them shipped directly to your door. NextRx's Over the Counter Department is a department of NextRx's Mail Service Pharmacy.

Allergy Season

Allergy season is here once again, as a reminder, Zyrtec, the most commonly prescribed allergy medication, is available without a prescription. Along with other OTC allergy medication, Zyrtec can be ordered through the NextRx OTC store and delivered right to your door. For other helpful information about managing upper respiratory allergies and medication, members can also visit myhealthyseasons.com

Date Correction

The September Health Awareness letter stated the incorrect date for the CHP Annual Membership Renewal Meeting, the correct date is Thursday, September 18 at 10:00 .am.

Alzheimer's and Memory Loss

(Continued)

are if memory loss interferes with your ability to conduct your daily routine or you're experiencing behavioral problems.

Those experiencing significant memory losses may try to cover it up by being less social, so they're not subjected to any tests. With so much confusion about the finer points of memory loss, the bottom line is that people concerned about it should feel comfortable turning to a physician.

While there isn't conclusive evidence supporting the idea that exercising the brain strengthens memory, doctors still recommend it. That could mean reading, having a conversation, learning a new language or learning to dance.

Mind Your Memory

Dr. Vincent Fortanasce, author of the new book *The Anti-Alzheimer's Prescription* points out that there's a difference between mental agility, which is our ability to multi-task and do things quickly, and mental capacity, which is our ability to reason and use our experience. When we age, just as we naturally lose physical agility, we lose mental agility. But you can do something about, even increase, your mental capacity as you grow older

Fortanasce's four-step method for staving off Alzheimer's includes dietary advice that stresses the importance of balance in the foods you consume (one-third carbohydrates, one-third protein, one-third fat) as well as the order in which you eat them.

The wrong dietary choices can have a significantly adverse impact on the memory.

Tofu

While usually considered a healthy choice, new research shows excess tofu consumption may increase the risk of memory loss in the elderly. A new study out of Loughborough and Oxford universities of more than 700 Indonesian people ages 52 to 98 shows that those who ate tofu at least once a day, particularly those in their 60s, had an increased risk of dementia or memory loss.

Carbohydrates

If you want to stave off Alzheimer's, consider cutting back on the carbs, says Dr. Vincent Fortanasce, author of *The Anti-Alzheimer's Prescription*. Overdoing it on carbs causes your insulin to spike. In doing so you're also causing the insulin-degrading enzyme that exists in the brain to work overtime removing insulin, rather than getting rid of beta-amyloid proteins, the toxic protein that produces Alzheimer's disease.

Fish

People who ate tuna and other fish high in omega-3 fatty acids three times or more per week had a nearly 26% lower risk of having the silent brain lesions that can cause dementia and stroke, compared to those who avoided fish, according to research appearing in the August issue of *Neurology*.

Source: www.webmd.com