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**2018 10.02 Health Matters**

**How’s Your Memory?**

**Joseph**

**This is Health Matters, discussing memory loss.**

**Michael**

**Maybe you can’t remember whether you turned the heater off before leaving the house. Or maybe you keep misplacing your keys, or forgot to keep an appointment.**

**Most of us have memory lapseshere and there. Often these lapses are a sign that we have too much going on. Or we’re not getting enough sleep. But when itkeeps happening, forgetfulness can be worrisome.**

**Coty**

**If memory lapses occur every day, several times a day, medical attention is needed. But occasional lapses do not necessarily signify a health problem. Stress could be a factor.**

**Supplement manufacturers claim that memory lapses can be addressed by taking memory boosting formulas. But according to *Consumer Reports*, there is virtually no evidence that brain boosting supplements prevent or delay memory lapses. Or prevent cognitive impairment. Or slow dementia.**

**Joseph**

**One study followed almost 3,000 older adultswho took ginkgo biloba extract twice a day for five years. The group had just as many cases of Alzheimer’s as the control group taking placebos.**

**Michael**

**No one wants to lose brain power. So it’s not surprising that brain supplements have become a profitable category for vitamin manufacturers. Sales of supplements claiming to boost human memory literally doubled between 2006 and 2015. Gingko biloba is often an ingredient in these supplements, even though studies have proven it’snot effective.**

**Certain B vitamins arealso popular in brain supplements. But again, studies have found that taking vitamins B6, B12 or folic acid failed to slow or reduce the risk of cognitive decline in older adults.**

**Coty**

**Consumer reports recommends avoiding products that are labeled as “memory boosting.” These products are loosely regulated and make unsubstantiated claims. Last year the federal Government Accountability Office – the GAO -- analyzed hundreds of ads promoting memory boosters. It found 27 products made illegal claims about treating or preventing memory loss diseases.**

**Joseph**

**Further, the GAO found that even companies making legal claims could not provide data to support them.**

**Coty**

**Right. The Council on Responsible Nutrition has stated the situation in no uncertain terms: “Dietary supplements cannot cure, mitigate, treat or prevent Alzheimer’s, dementia, or any disease.**

**Joseph**

**There’s another problem with supplements. For example, ginkgo biloba should not be taken with blood pressure medications, blood thinners or SSRI anti-depressants. Also, some formulas may contain undisclosed ingredients that interfere with medications.**

**Michael**

**Claims that fish oil can benefit the brain are a different matter. Studies document that people who consistently eat omega-3 fats may have a lower risk of dementia. But it’s the whole food sources of these fatty acids that provide the benefit. Like salmon and other fatty fishes. Not fish oil supplements.**

**A 2012 data review found that thousands of older adults taking omega-3 supplements did no better on short-term memory tests than people taking placebos. And over time they did not have fewer dementia diagnoses.**

**Joseph**

**If you check out memory supplements on line you’ll find lists of top-rated products. But if you read the details, what they claim is that they don’t contain synthetics. Or they have high consumer reviews.**

**Coty**

**So the take away is to eat more salmon.**

**Michael**

**Yes. And there’s another strategy for keeping the brain in working order. Exercise! A 2011 study found that over one million cases of Alzheimer’s were due to a sedentary lifestyle. That’s staggering and it’s sad. It’s also a wake-up call. Physical activities can delay or slow cognitive decline, not to mention the other benefits.**

**Exercise every day and keep brain decline at bay. There are many options. At almost any age. Walking, weight lifting, yoga, tai chi, jogging, gardening. Take your pick and keep at it.**

**Coty**

**There’s also giving your brain a work-out. You can’t totally defeat Father Time. Brain cells do lose capacities with age. But brain cells have something called plasticity. They can take on and retain new information. That’s why brain teaser games are being promoted as a memory boosting strategy. Although experts say doing these games on line is counter-productive. Learning a new language isconsidered highly effective. Other forms of memorizing are also effective. Maybe a poem, or a song.**

**Michael**

**However … If you find you’re having memory lapses on a daily basis, check in with your doctor.**

**Joseph**

**Health Matters is a production of KIDE Hoopa CA.  Produced and written by Cynthia Poten. Engineered by Michael Heminger.  Our readers were Coty Yarbrough, Michael Heminger and Joseph Orozco.  For this audio and more information, visit our download area at  www.kidefm.org. Thank you for listening. Your health adds to the health of our community.**

**Sources and Links**

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