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Brain Fog

Have you gone through times when you have struggled to think clearly? You know the information but can't access it? Your brain just isn't as sharp as before? Though there is no one medical term that's used to describe this state, it's a common condition that many refer to as brain fog. With this condition, you notice your brain just isn't functioning at the level you are used to.

What causes brain fog? There are many different possible causes which means the key to figuring this out is working with a doctor on an individual basis. Some of the most common causes relate to too much inflammation in the body, which affects the brain. This can be from eating sugar and other processed foods or having a health condition with inflammation as a symptom. Food sensitivities or allergies can also promote inflammation and other reactions. Brain fog can also be caused by nutritional or vitamin deficiencies. Lifestyle choices such as being too sedentary, not getting enough exercise and spending a lot of time 'zoning out' with entertainment can contribute to making one's thinking less sharp. Thyroid or other hormonal imbalances can particularly affect one's ability to think clearly and should be tested for and addressed. In addition, there are toxins in the environment and side effects of supplements or medications that affect your ability to use your brain.

There are many other possibilities but one that is getting more attention recently are genetic mutations which affect the body's ability to process vitamins so that they can be utilized by the body. One type of mutation affects the MTHFR gene. The official name of this gene is methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase (NAD(P)H) and it is involved in converting B vitamins, such as folate, from one form to another, so that they are useable for the body and brain. A mutation in the gene means reduced ability to process these so that the brain isn't getting what it needs to create the neurochemicals necessary for proper brain functioning. This can lead to the brain fog described above, as well as depression and other mental health issues. In addition, there can be health effects in the body, such as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, preeclampsia, glaucoma, and certain types of cancer.

Luckily there is a simple blood test that can tell you your MTHFR status and then there is a simple solution. There are supplement and prescription B vitamins that have already been converted so that they can be utilized by the body without the individual needing to be able to make this conversion.

Brain fog may seem complex but the rewards of figuring it out are worth it. Find a doctor who will work with you to explore the possible causes and help you make the changes necessary to correct it. For me, there is nothing better than hearing patients say "I feel like me again", as we treat the brain fog and their energy and mental clarity return.

