

“Brain Fog” What the heck is going on?

One of the most common complaints I hear, other than fatigue, is brain fog. Let’s dive into some of the causes of this very common complaint and what can be done about it.

Inflammation from food sensitivity or gut trauma like viruses can cause proteins or undigested particles to spill over into the blood and cause low levels of inflammation. The symptoms can present as chronic skin issues, joint pain, or brain fog. Most patients report that brain fog lifts after eliminating trigger foods in the diet. Fix the gut first!

Thyroid issues can either be chronic or subacute. Thyroid symptoms show up as physical symptoms like constipation, low energy, dry skin or brain fog. If blood testing does not show primary thyroid issues there may be secondary thyroid problems that can easily be managed with functional medicine. Thyroid issues are 10 times more common in women than men.

Vitamin deficiencies are common and B vitamins like B12 and Folic acid (B9) are essential for mental performance. Vitamin B12 needs intrinsic factor for absorption so I always recommend a sublingual version of B12. The alternative is an injectable form of B12. Anemia is often triggered by deficiencies in B12, folic acid or iron. If you don't have enough red blood cells you may feel fatigue or depressed. Laboratory testing is helpful here.

In a similar fashion, low blood pressure can affect brain function. If blood pressure is low, it is possible the oxygen levels are also low. Other conditions like fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome and sleep disorders can also contribute to brain fog.

Brain fog symptoms can vary from person to person. Sometimes brain fog can be temporary. But some people report that their “fog” worsens over time. Others find their symptoms come and go. In many cases addressing the underlying cause helps clear their brain fog.

A healthy lifestyle can help protect your cognitive function. Eat a well balanced diet, get regular exercise and adequate sleep, practice meditation, and make up stories for your grandkids.

If all these things come up short, functional medicine looks for the cause of your symptoms. Give us a call if you're tired of feeling sick and tired.