

Brain Fog

'Brain fog' is a very common symptom of the menopause and many women worry they are losing their memory or even getting dementia.

Women often report that they notice that they are forgetful, lose things, can't remember names and have to write everything down in order to remember their list of tasks. This can make it hard to function at home and work and is very distressing and irritating for many.

Thousands of pounds of taxpayer's money is wasted each year by the NHS sending women for tests, referring to memory clinics and adding to anxiety and a sense of feeling unwell. Fortunately, the right type and dose of hormone replacement therapy, including testosterone replacement can often improve brain fog, concentration, memory and help reduce this anxiety.

How Oestrogen and Testosterone affect the brain

Two of the main female hormones, oestrogen and testosterone play an important role in brain health and wellbeing.

Oestrogen

When the levels of these hormones begin to fall during perimenopause and menopause, this can lead to a range of cognitive symptoms like memory loss, lack of focus, losing your train of thought, forgetting words and getting confused easily. There are millions of Oestrogen receptors in the the brain helping to maintain the brains energy levels and helping it recharge and regenerate.

Testosterone - (produced by the ovaries too)

This strengthens nerves in the brain and contributes to mental sharpness and clarity as well as overall brain energy levels. It also supports brain blood flow which is crucial to help protect against loss of memory and to keep the brain rich in nutrients and glucose.

Lifestyle support

A Healthy Diet

There are clear links between what we eat and the impact this can have on brain function. A brain friendly diet is one rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids, such as Omega 3 and Omega 6, which are found in eggs, fish, nuts and seeds. Vital brain antioxidants, in particular vitamins A, C and E are needed to mop up cellular waste products that can slow brain function down and make it less efficient, these are found in nuts, seeds, avocados and oily fish.

Regular Exercise

Regular exercise is vital to brain health so make time to keep active every day if you can. Cardiovascular activity such as yoga, swimming, walking and meditating are all great, just do what you enjoy but make it a daily habit.

Deep Sleep

It's common to have trouble sleeping during the perimenopause and menopause as the brain is unable to regulate sleep properly without the hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. One of the most common symptoms of oestrogen deficient sleep disorders is waking frequently at night resulting in lack of a deep sleep (also known as REM sleep) vital for brain health. For this reason, it's important to get a good routine in place. Take steps to improve your sleep habits, such as limiting screen time before bed, keeping your bedroom cool, dark and comfortable and maybe having a warm, magnesium-soaked bath before bed. Although sleep problems in the perimenopause and menopause can be multifactorial, many women find that the quality of their sleep dramatically improves when they begin taking HRT and better quality sleep boosts mood, helps energy levels, stops us snacking on sweet foods, makes us more active and keeps us looking younger!