



HEALTH MINISTRY

Isaiah 26:3 *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”*

Brain Fog

Research shows that neither aging nor senility is typically to blame for clouded thinking. Forgetfulness, attention lapses and other complaints about mental sharpness are more closely related to mood and general mental health. It could stem from an underlying medical condition or a drug’s side effects, but most often it’s a disturbance in sleep or mood, or simply the harried, stressful nature of modern life. If you’ve been feeling off your game, here are six steps you can take to restore mental clarity.

1. Step one should be a medical checkup: high blood pressure; chronic pain; chemical, hormonal (e.g. menopause), metabolic imbalances (which can be found with lab tests) may be the cause.

2. Review your medications: The list of drugs which MAY dull one’s senses include opiate-based pain relievers, older antihistamines and certain antibiotics. 20% of cognitive impairment in older people is attributable to anticholinergics, which are used to treat asthma, stomach ulcers, urinary incontinence and other conditions. If you suspect that a medication is affecting your thinking, TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR about reducing the dose or substituting another drug. The list below can cause confusion especially in people who are older, weigh less than average or have kidney or liver problems.

ANTIARRHYTHMICS: digoxin (Lanoxin), disopyramide (Norpace)	ANTIBIOTICS,ANTIVIRALS: acyclovir (Zovirax), ciprofloxacin(Cipro), ganciclovir (Cytovene), metronidazole (Flagyl)	ANTIHISTAMINES: chlorpheniramine (ChlorTrimeton), demehydrinate (Dramamine), dephenhydramine (Benadryl Allergy)
ANTIHYPERTENSIVES: Clonidine (Catapres) beta blockers such as atenolol (Tenormin), metoprolol (Lopressor), propranolol (Inderol)	CORTICOSTEROIDS: methylprednisolone (Medrol, Meprolone) prednisone (Deltasone,Orasone)	COUGH & CONGESTION: dextromethorphan (Robitussin Cough Gels), pseudoephedrine (Sudafed)
GASTROINTESTINAL: cimetidine (Tagamet), diphenoxylate (combined with atropine in Lofene, Lomotil), dicyclomine (Bentyl), glycopyrrolate (Robinul), hyoscyamine (Anaspaz, Cystospaz), scopolamine (Scopace)	INCONTINENCE: oxybutynin (Ditropan), solifenacin (VESIcare), tolterodine (Detrol)	MIGRAINE: naratriptan (Amerge), rizatriptan (Maxalt)

MUSCLE RELAXANTS; Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril), Orphenadrine (Antiflex)	PAINKILLERS; Codeine (generic) Meperidine (Demerol), Pentazocine (Talwin), Propoxyphene (Darvon)	PARKINSON'S: amantadine (Symmetrel), levodopa (Sinemet), selegiline (Eldepryl)
SLEEP: eszopiclone (Lunesta), zaleplon (Sonata), zolpidem (Ambien CR)	TRICYCLIC ANTIDEPRESSANTS; amitriptyline (Elavil), imipramine (Tofranil), nortriptyline (Pamlor)	

- 3. Reboot your brain:** Your body responds to stress by releasing a cascade of hormones that put all body systems on full alert. In the short term, that provides a surge of energy, heightened awareness and sharp focus so you can meet deadlines. But in protracted or very stressful situations, too many nerve cells fire at once. That's when you freeze. A whole lot of small hassles can have the same effect as a major stressor. So...do one thing at a time: avoid multi-tasking. Give your body a break: sleep, ask for support, use your vacation time.
- 4. Improve your sleep:** Go to bed and wake at the same time each day. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, heavy exercise before bedtime.
- 5. Exercise:** Physical activity improves brain function in the same regions adversely affected by stress and lack of sleep. Schedule an appointment with yourself to regularly exercise and make this a very high priority. No one else can keep you healthy!
- 6. Call someone:** Interacting with other people and socializing is associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

Submitted by Barb Emigh, RN

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