

Phosphatidyl Serine

for fibro-fog

by Margy Squires

Are you losing your mind? Ask yourself the following about common, everyday tasks. Can you remember a person's name after you've just been introduced? Grocery items when you go to the store? Do you forget the rest of the phone number before you get through dialing? Are you always misplacing keys or other objects you use daily?

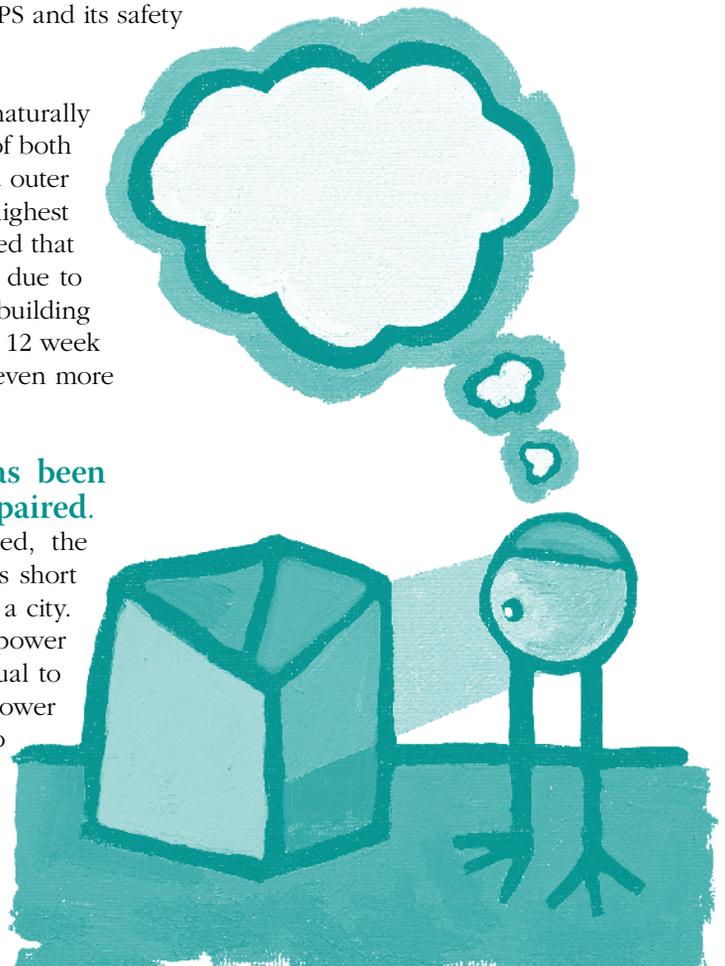
These are a sampling of questions from cognitive tests designed by renowned researcher on memory and aging, Thomas Crook, Ph.D. If you failed the quiz, you could be a candidate for one of his studies on dementia! Or could it be you just have fibro-fog? Sounds almost the same, doesn't it? Either way, phosphatidyl serine (phos·pha·ti·dyl·ser·ine)—PS for short—is amazing when it comes to matters of the mind (and the rest of your aging body!)

Even more amazing is that few people know about PS. This nutrient has been studied for more than 30 years, including successful human trials, for improving both memory and brain function. In fact, Crook and his colleagues conducted the first U.S. double-blind study on PS in the U.S. in 1991. His conclusion: PS was “the best thing he had ever seen for restoring memory loss” even when compared to 100 drugs. Well designed and thorough, Crook's findings were published in a peer reviewed journal. This is significant because many medical professionals only recognize studies as noteworthy if they are double-blind and peer review published. What should be as significant are the more than 3000 peer reviewed research papers that scientist and phospholipids researcher Parris Kidd, Ph.D., analyzed. Kidd determined that PS “is the single best nutrient for safely conserving and restoring crucial higher functions of the brain” in terms of cognition. Kidd goes on to say that “the remarkable benefits of PS and its safety in use are now established beyond doubt”.

What is this amazing nutrient? Phosphatidyl serine is a naturally occurring phospholipid that your body makes. PS is comprised of both water and lipid (fat) soluble material that protects the inner and outer membrane of the 100 trillion cells that keep you alive. The highest concentration of PS is in the billion cells of the brain. It's believed that only 15% of brain cell death or disability is genetic; the rest is due to free radical damage that affects the cell membrane. As a major building block of the membrane, PS “minds” the white matter. In Crook's 12 week study, results were seen in as little as three weeks. But there's even more good news.

Not only does PS keep cells more viable, PS has been shown to “regenerate” cells and activity previously impaired.

Even when the study and the supplement were discontinued, the benefits from PS continued. That's proof positive that PS works short and long term. Think of your brain as one big electrical grid in a city. Each city block might be one circuit of that grid. Imagine a power outage that affects the circuit. The extent of the blackout is equal to the number of circuits that lose “power”. Any circuit without power affects communication to a circuit connected to it as well as to other grids and other cities. The circuitry in your brain is similar in how it communicates, both within the brain and outside to distant nerves in your fingers and toes. PS has the ability to “turn the power back on”. PS increases activity in such a way that it is observable on Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scans which measure energy (power) in the brain!



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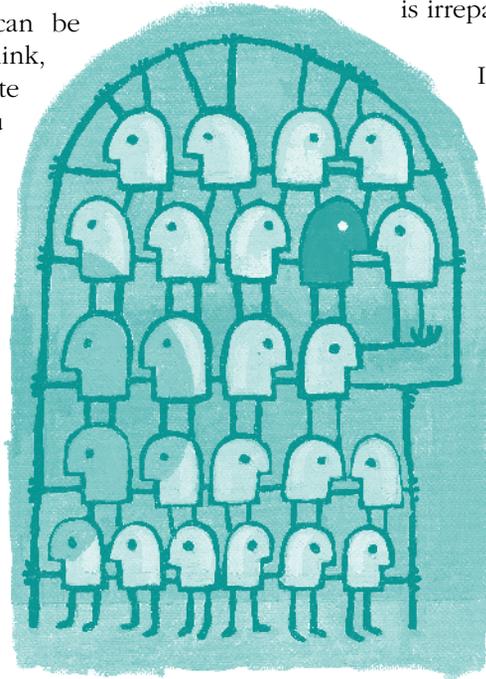
Remember the questions asked in the first paragraph? Your cognitive ability can be determined by testing how you think, reason, learn, concentrate and translate thoughts into words and how much you can remember. When certain parts of the brain are impaired, it is difficult to recall what you already know; moreover, your ability to learn new things is challenged. The statistical facts are that dementia affects 40% of those 50-59 years of age, 50% in the 60-69 range, and so forth. The term for this phenomenon is *age related cognitive decline* (ARCD).

The earlier you start 'losing your mind', the higher your risk for developing Alzheimer's, an advanced form of dementia. Loss of the familiar, like remembering people and faces, is one of the first "recalls" a person susceptible to Alzheimer's loses. In both mild to moderate dementia and Alzheimer's research, PS improved recall and it did so safely. In some studies, participants continued their regular medications. One study included a subgroup of participants where the average age was 64 years. In followup testing on PS, these participants reflected brain function levels similar to that of 52 year olds.

Many people with fibromyalgia describe feeling "like an old person" mentally as well as physically and pain adds to the problem. Perhaps the process by which short term memory gets converted to long term is interrupted by distracting pain signals. Maybe disturbances in brain neurochemicals affect how these messages are deciphered in the first place. PS can strengthen cellular messaging, neurochemistry and other cellular functions both directly and indirectly. Could it help fibro-fog as well? PS's involvement in the receptor binding sites for neurotransmitters like dopamine, acetylcholine and serotonin suggest it can. Plus, PS helps the mitochondria.

Brain studies in many neurodegenerative disorders such as multiple sclerosis, Huntington's, Parkinson's, stroke and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis suggest that mitochondrial insufficiency may be a contributing cause to cell death. Kidd's 2005 paper (*Alt Med Rev* 12/05) offers an answer: intervention with what he calls "brain energetics", nutrients that support the mitochondria like CoQ10, alpha lipoic acid and NADH. Others like PS support the mitochondria and nerve growth factor receptors to improve cognition, particularly when combined with omega-3 fatty acids.

Another remarkable feature of PS is that it helps protect myelin, the sheath that covers nerve cells, which facilitates nerve impulses. Demyelinated myelin is also a factor in neurodegenerative disorders and once damaged is irreparable.



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If all of this "amazing" news has convinced you to give PS a try, you'll have to supplement to reach the study doses (300 mg per day). Most foods, including lecithin, are low in PS. As you age, your ability to make PS declines as well. As a supplement compounded from soya lecithin, PS has an impeccable safety record.

How much should you take?

Although lower doses were beneficial, it took months longer to see results. The suggested dose is 100 mg taken three times a day with food. As with most supplements, start lower dose and increase slowly. After one to two months at 300 mg—to "flood" membranes—PS can usually be reduced to a maintenance dose of 100 mg a day.

Naturopathic Michael Murray thinks supplementing the diet with other nutrients that help the brain make PS—essential fatty acids with flaxseed oil, 800 mcg folic acid, 800 mg B12 and

1000 mg vitamin C daily—is also a "very good idea". Now, where are my car keys?

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References omitted for space consideration.

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