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Alzheimer's

by Raymond Francis

Several years ago our nation mourned the loss of former president Ronald Reagan. Reagan died of a tragic disease called Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's progressively damages brain cells leading to impaired memory, thinking, and behavior. A tragic, costly, and growing disease among our elderly, Alzheimer's is now affecting younger people in their 30s, 40s and 50s. It is time to think about how to prevent and mitigate Alzheimer's.

In my book *Never Be Sick Again*, I related how Dr. Morton Walker questioned members of a long-lived native population about dementia. These healthy people typically lived well into their hundreds; yet they didn't know what dementia was. They had never experienced anything like dementia and did not have a word in their language to describe it. These people lived almost a half century longer than we do, yet we are told that Alzheimer's is a disease of aging and the price we must pay for living so long.

Alzheimer's is no different than other chronic diseases. It is something we have created with our modern diets and lifestyles. Since we created it, we can uncreate it. Like any so-called disease, Alzheimer's is nothing more than malfunctioning cells. The question to ask is this: Why are these brain cells malfunctioning and what can be done to prevent and reverse it? There are many factors to consider. Let's have a look at some.

Recent research, including a study in a 2004 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, has determined that Alzheimer's results from free radical activity in the brain which produces "a neurodegenerative cascade that leads to clinical disease." Free radicals play a role in virtually all diseases; they damage DNA and cellular machinery, causing cellular malfunction. So where are these free radicals coming from? Alzheimer's is characterized by the formation of beta-amyloid peptides around brain cells. Beta-amyloid is the protein fragment considered by many experts to be the prime suspect triggering nerve cell degeneration in Alzheimer's patients. *Research shows that when these naturally-produced beta-amyloid peptides accumulate, they cause high levels of destructive free-radical activity.*

If beta-amyloid peptide accumulation creates damaging free radicals, it would be useful to understand why this happens so we can prevent it. A study in the May 2003 *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* offers one explanation; it has to do with the deadly metabolic poison known as sugar. Sugar causes every imaginable disease, including Alzheimer's. Eating sugar increases blood sugar levels, causing an increase in blood insulin. The enzyme *insulysin* degrades insulin so as to restore normal insulin levels. However, this same enzyme also degrades beta-amyloid peptides in the brain. The researchers believe that regular sugar consumption creates chronically high insulin levels. High insulin uses up too much of the available insulysin

capacity, thereby preventing the normal degradation of amyloid peptides and leading to an accumulation of beta-amyloid peptides in the brain—causing Alzheimer's. President Reagan was well known for his high consumption of sugar in the form of jelly beans. In addition, there is another mechanism at work. The body's reaction to high blood sugar results in low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), and low blood sugar makes the brain much more susceptible to damage from common toxins we are regularly exposed to.

High homocysteine levels generate brain-damaging free radicals. According to a study in a February 2002 *New England Journal of Medicine*, people with high levels of homocysteine have double the risk of Alzheimer's compared to those with normal homocysteine. People who are deficient in vitamins B6, B12 and folic acid often develop high homocysteine. In a March 1997 study in the *Journal of Gerontology and Biological Sciences*, Alzheimer's patients were found to be deficient in both vitamin B12 and folate when compared to age-matched controls. In fact, supplemental B12 has been shown to completely reverse memory loss in some older people. About 15 percent of the population has a gene that puts them at high risk for dementia when deficient in B12. Supplementation with B12 will both prevent and reverse this dementia. B vitamins are critical to controlling homocysteine and B vitamins are depleted by eating sugar, a major component of jelly beans.

Magnesium deficiency plays a vital role in the development of neurological diseases. This is because magnesium deficiency not only precipitates the production of free radicals, it also magnifies the extent of the damage. Low magnesium levels double the number of free radicals in the body. Most Americans are deficient in magnesium and magnesium is depleted by eating sugar, a major component of jelly beans.

Food additives in the form of flavor enhancers such as MSG, artificial sweeteners such as aspartame, artificial colors, and artificial flavors all damage brain cells and contribute to neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's. These dangerous neurotoxins are found in all manner of processed foods including breakfast cereals, sodas and jelly beans.

Another factor in the causation of Alzheimer's is aluminum. A study by the University of California focused on a region in northwestern Italy that is known to have a high concentration of aluminum in its drinking water. In fact, some of this water contains six times the maximum amount of aluminum recommended by most environmental agencies. The study concluded that this region of Italy had an above average death rate from Alzheimer's and that even minute amounts of aluminum accelerated cellular death. Almost all municipal water supplies in the U.S. contain aluminum, not to mention toothpaste tubes, aluminum cookware, and food and beverages packaged in aluminum including fruit juices, beer and sodas. Adding fluoride to our drinking water and toothpaste compounds the problem. Fluoride, a dangerous toxin in its own right, is known to enhance the absorption of aluminum by reacting with fluoride to form aluminum fluoride, a powerful neurotoxin which is easily transported into the brain. Combining aluminum, fluoride, and aspartame in a soda creates an enormously powerful mixture of brain toxins. Unfortunately, numerous processed foods including soups, breakfast cereals, and jelly beans are made using tap water containing aluminum fluoride.

Mercury produces free radicals and poses a particular risk. A study in the April 2001 issue of the British journal *NeuroReport* stated: "Seven of the characteristic markers that we look for to distinguish Alzheimer's disease can be produced in normal brain tissues...by the addition of extremely low levels of mercury." Alzheimer's patients are known to have higher than average mercury levels, and the *American people have 557 tons of mercury in their dental fillings!* Even the mercury contained in vaccines contributes; *having a flu shot five years in a row will increase your risk of Alzheimer's by 1000 percent.*

High cholesterol is a risk factor. High cholesterol increases the level of certain proteins that are abnormally processed by people with Alzheimer's. This sets off a chain reaction resulting in forming beta-amyloid peptides. Sugar consumption increases cholesterol.

Another risk factor for Alzheimer's is the now highly-discredited hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for women. A May 2003 *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that *HRT doubles the risk of Alzheimer's disease.* "No one anticipated this outcome," said Dr. Marilyn Albert, a professor of neurobiology at John's Hopkins. This news was just the latest in a series of studies finding that the supposed benefits of HRT do not exist and that HRT increases the risk of serious diseases, including those it was supposed to prevent. Because of HRT, millions of women are at risk for everything from cancer to heart disease to Alzheimer's (another of Modern Medicine's epic blunders).

Other sources of brain-damaging free radicals include fluoride in toothpaste, illegal street drugs including marijuana, pesticides, and herbicides, all of which are capable of doing permanent brain damage. As you can see, much is known about the risk factors that contribute to Alzheimer's. However, we also know a lot about how certain substances can slow its progression and improve function in patients. Knowing what we know now, we can prevent almost all cases of Alzheimer's as well as slowing and even reversing its development in those already afflicted. All that is necessary is to put this knowledge to work.

Since Alzheimer's results from free radical damage to the brain, the need to supply the body with antioxidant nutrients such as vitamins C and E is obvious. There is overwhelming evidence that antioxidants are highly protective in both prevention and treatment of Alzheimer's. For example, in a recent animal experiment vitamin E was found to prevent beta-amyloid peptides from killing brain cells.

To prevent or mitigate Alzheimer's, start your own program now. Begin with a good diet. First, get the Big Four *out* of your life; sugar, white flour, processed oils, and milk products are huge contributors to our epidemic of chronic and degenerative disease. Eat a minimum of five servings of fresh, organic fruit and vegetables every day. Avoid all processed and fast foods. Avoid coffee, carbonated drinks, snack foods, and french fries. Get supermarket oils out of your life. Supplement with omega-3 fats; people with the highest intake of fish oil have 70 percent lower risk.

Beyond eating right, supplementing with high quality Beyond Health-approved nutrients is essential. Vitamins A, C, D, E, K, carotenes, quercetin, lipoic acid, CoQ10, N-acetyl-L-cysteine, acetyl-L-carnitine, phosphatidylserine, glycerophosphocholine, plus magnesium and manganese

are all highly protective. Vitamin B complex including B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, B12 and folic acid is a must. New research shows that people with the highest intake of B3 had 80 percent lower risk. Adding the herb ginkgo biloba to the above is also recommended. Recent studies have shown ginkgo to be just as effective as prescription drugs in treating Alzheimer's and, of course, without the side effects. All this may sound like a lot, but many of these nutrients come together in one pill. Consult with Beyond Health to get what you need. Exercising your brain is also important. If you don't use it, you lose it. Read about new things, do crossword puzzles, play chess, learn new skills, and keep socially engaged. Regular saunas are helpful to reduce toxic load. Regular exercise has been found to be good for brain function. Exercise for at least 30 minutes daily and definitely include rebounding in your regimen. Everyone needs to be rebounding!

We can and must stop this unnecessary epidemic of Alzheimer's. To prevent and arrest Alzheimer's, one of the most important things anyone can do is stop eating sugar—an incredibly dangerous poison. Then get the mercury, fluoride, aluminum and all processed foods and oils out of your life. The combination of good food and supplemental omega-3 fats, B vitamins, magnesium, and vitamins C and E will give you enormous protection.

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