Stats are greatly against us. On average, by the age of 70 our brain will be 15% lighter than it was in our 20s, beginning to deteriorate with aging damage in our 30s. Fifty is considered the new 30 in modern anti-aging circles. But when brain cell power yields way to younger ones as a result of age-related oxidation, cell death, plaque buildup, impaired blood flow, energy loss and other environmental and biochemical assaults, 50 becomes, well, just plain old. And depressing.

Brain cells don’t divide unlike those of the skin and other tissues. Generally, when cells divide and are in prime health, repair genes can actually make the next division healthier. The progenitor cells die off, too, leaving only the healthier nuclei of new cells behind. The cerebral cells simply have no second chance; they can’t improve their lot through the usual method. Damage control is more difficult and much more necessary.

Especially in older populations, dementia occurs in tandem with depression, leading scientists to surmise mid-life blues are a form of brain damage.

The co-occurrence of depression and cognitive impairment doubles every five years after age 70, and by the time one is 85, the chances are 25% that one will be afflicted with depression and cognitive impairment that will adversely impact one’s life, say Guy G. Potter, PhD of the Duke University School of Medicine in Durham, North Carolina and David C. Steffens, MD, of the University of Connecticut Health Center, Farmington. “Depression is primarily a mood disorder, but it can also be viewed as a cognitive disorder for many older adults,” they add.

DID YOU KNOW?

- By age 70 brain weighs 15% less than in 20s
- Brain aging begins in 30s
- Depression is a form of brain damage
- Brain cells don’t divide after age 13, ie, have no second chance
- Losing brain is not an unavoidable part of aging

Noni treatment increased brain levels of acetylcholine and ATP, the energy molecule.

Noni, an antioxidant-rich tropical fruit from the South Seas, is the antidote to brain aging, according to studies. Treatment with noni for three days “significantly improved memory and CBF. These observations suggest that noni may be useful in memory impairment due to its effect on CBF, AChE and oxidative stress.”

How to Increase Nerve Transmission and Regrow Capillaries
In the January 2012 issue of the Journal of Ethnopharmacology, noni fruit’s effect on memory, cerebral blood flow (CBF), oxidative stress and AChE activity in chemically induced amnesia was examined. Treatment with noni for three days “significantly improved memory and CBF. These observations suggest that noni may be useful in memory impairment due to its effect on CBF, AChE and oxidative stress.”

ALZHEIMER’S MEMORY IMPAIRMENT
Noni extract also prevents Alzheimer’s-related memory impairment. The amyloid plaques that form in the brain of Alzheimer’s disease. In an experimental study a toxic peptide was used that causes amyloid plaque buildup and cognitive decline, but additional noni treatment caused “a significant increase in short-term memory and long-term memory.” Levels of monoamine oxidase-A, a toxic enzyme associated with age-related mental decline, decreased—but the addition of noni caused “a significant increase in the levels of serotonin and dopamine,” two neurotransmitters responsible for mood and alertness.

Antioxidant enzymes such as superoxide dismutase, glutathione reductase, glutathione peroxidase and ascorbic acid were decreased significantly in the amyloid positive group. Yet with noni antioxidant levels were “restored significantly.”

HALT BRAIN DETERIORATION
Noni’s ability to halt brain deterioration is related to its recently discovered high antioxidant activity. Much of the damage to brain tissues is caused by oxidation, a type of rust that occurs in the brain much like what happens to iron left in the rain or an apple that turns brown. This type of damage is prevented by antioxidants, chemicals from foods and produced by the body, which lend unstable free radicals an extra electron to quench their cell-damaging activity. The ability of noni to defend against damaging oxidants, or free radicals is called oxygen radical absorbance capacity or ORAC. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland, developed the ORAC test to show how well foods protect brain cells from oxidation, using an activity of 100 as the base. High ORAC foods are known to boost blood antioxidant levels, prevent loss of memory and learning ability and return brain cells to youth. These foods protect tiny blood vessels—capillaries—against damage and stimulate transport of oxygen, energy molecules and antioxidants to brain tissues, according to NIH experts who did the ORAC test.

NONI LEATHER RANKED HIGHEST IN ORAC
According to UBE Analytical Laboratories of Fullerton, California, noni fruit leather, processed at low temperatures under raw food principles and free of harmful chemical content, provides 340,000 ORAC units per 100 grams. This makes the fruit leather even more potent than cloves per serving and more plentiful with antioxidant power than apples, blueberries, pomegranates, raisins and grapes, all known for being an antioxidant powerhouse.

As for whether to use noni juice or noni leather for preserving brain function, based on comparable serving sizes, noni fruit leather is 13.9 times more potent than commercial juice.

NONI AND DEMENTIA
Memory loss, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and other cognitive and neurological diseases are thought to result from at least in part from inadequate antioxidant production. Supplying the diet with foods rich in free radical quenchers protects brain tissues, says experts. Diets supplying a single serving of noni fruit leather provide over 6,000 ORAC, more than the NIH recommends as an optimal daily serving.

Researchers say the antioxidants in noni make it an ideal candidate for prevention of dementia in aging. Although the fruit’s high rate of perishability has limited its export, on Kauai, Hawaii’s Garden Isle, organic noni is processed into antioxidant-rich fruit leather that retains its memory boosting antioxidants, according to laboratory analyses, and these appear to fight chemicals that cook the aged brain.

There is hope that we can preserve our brain power, according to a study that examined the impact of aging on preserved brain tissues. “Some of the oldest [even one man in his 90s] had remarkably good-looking brains,” Bruce Yanker, MD, PhD, of Harvard Medical School in Cambridge, Massachusetts said. “Our findings raise the exciting possibility that drugs or lifestyle changes in young adults could delay cognitive declines and protect against the onset of brain diseases in later years.”

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