**Cumbria Advisory Thyroid Service**



**INFORMATION SHEET**

*INFORMATION SHEET - MEMORY & CONCENTRATION LOSS*

Your brain is part of another system of the body which can be affected by a thyroid dysfunction. However it is an amazing system containing one million nerve cells which both "hear and talk to each other"!

It does not deteriorate with aging unless there is an underlying illness affecting the communication signals. In the case of thyroid dysfunction these signals tend, as do other systems in the body, either to under-react or over-react. This can lead to a state of confusion, sometimes mixed up with a diagnosis of senile dementia or Alzheimer`s disease. Therefore it is very important for a thyroid function test to be carried out first before other measures or treatments begin.

When memory and concentration fail us we become depressed and the vicious circle of confusion begins. It is important to treat the brain as any other system of the body and recognise it`s needs. It needs nourishment, which means a balanced diet and again plenty of fluids. Dehydration (not enough fluid intake) can also cause confusion. High blood pressure must be treated and coupled with proper exercise will keep the correct circulation of blood going to the brain in order for it to function well. Lack of sleep and smoking interferes with this process - so good habits of sleeping well and not smoking are advised. Certain drugs will also interfere with the brain function such as sleeping pills, anti-anxiety medications, and antidepressants - these all slow down the mental processes. However, one can alleviate the confusion by taking certain measures to keep the brain active.

Learn to listen and try to exercise your mind by learning again. Don`t get distracted by other things. Keep a diary, do the crossword and logic puzzles and learn how to answer quizzes and questions again. Take your time to evaluate what has been asked of you. Read books and study that subject that you were always interested in - be it a science, an art or a hobby. Do these things every day - the brain does not go on holiday unless you let it. You are in charge of your mental processes. Learn to dream and visualise again. Make it a happy experience - put the past bad memories in their place - locked away, and lose the key.

You can supplement your diet with omega-3 fish oils, extra vitamins such as A, C and E found in fresh fruit and vegetables. The mineral selenium is good for the brain as well as being good for the thyroid sufferer. Vitamin B complex found in green vegetables, wholemeal bread and fortified breakfast cereals is very good for mental health. Fish and rice contain a substance known as PS (Phosphatidylserine) which is a memory booster. Also Ginkgo biloba increases the circulation of blood and oxygen to the brain. Another simple thing is to learn how to breathe properly - again boosting oxygen to the brain. Breathe in through the nose, hold for ten seconds and then breathe out through the mouth, holding the diaphragm muscle under the ribs and feeling it work. Shallow breathing does not ensure the correct amount of oxygen to the brain. So deep breathe as often as you can, especially in fresh air or near the sea.

Reducing the stresses in your life, balancing your needs and your thyroid all helps to regain the concentration and memory abilities. Make sure that you are getting the right treatments for all your conditions. HRT in menopausal women has been found to help with memory and concentration levels - oestrogen loss being a major cause of memory dysfunction during menopause.

## C.A.T.S RECOMMENDS YOU ALWAYS SEEK YOUR DOCTORS ADVICE

## Disclaimer

***The purpose of this information leaflet is to help those suffering with thyroid disease. Whilst every effort is made to provide accurate information, it is impossible to ensure that the information given is relevant to every individual. No responsibility is accepted by CATS and it is recommended and essential, that if in any doubt about your condition, that you should always contact your doctor, specialist physician or surgeon to seek medical advice.***