



Neurotransmitters

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*“In the end, it’s not the years  
in your life that count. It’s  
the life in your years”*

-Abraham Lincoln

New In-Home Care Model

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FALL 2018

# fit FOR thought

## Vitamins and Minerals: Metabolic Tune-Up of Expensive Urine?

Are vitamins a waste of money? Yes, but ONLY IF you eat wild, fresh whole, organic, local, non-genetically modified foods grown in virgin mineral-and nutrient-rich soils, not transported across vast distances and not stored for months before being eaten. Also, only if you work and live outside, breathe only fresh unpolluted air and drink only pure clean water, sleep nine hours a night, move your body every day, and remain free of chronic stressors and exposure to environmental toxins. Then you don't need vitamins.

I'm pretty sure this describes no one, or very few people on the planet. We probably all need vitamins. Most people don't understand the role of vitamins. They're cofactors, or coenzymes, that run every piece of your biochemistry. They are the raw ingredients that make your body function, and most of us are not getting enough.

To acquire the vitamins and minerals you need, you usually need to take the following every day:

- B-complex
- Multivitamin
- Magnesium
- Vitamin D
- Probiotics (for many people with gastrointestinal issues)
- Omega -3's.

Be sure and purchase quality supplements by doing your research. Remember to maintain good dietary habits with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables!



# FEATURES



Julio Cantero, MD  
Medical Director  
Center for Brain Health

## *Neurotransmitters: Helping Our Neurons Talk to Each Other!*

Neurotransmitters are messengers' molecules produced by nerve cells to communicate and control almost every function of your body. They are the way your brain "talks". Each nerve cell releases different neurotransmitters, which then must find receptors on other cells, bind to them, and communicate instructions for those cells.

All these neurotransmitters are built from the proteins you get in your diet—specifically the eight essential amino acids you must get from the foods you eat. Without adequate protein, your brain and body will suffer, because they don't have the raw ingredients they need to create these neurotransmitters.

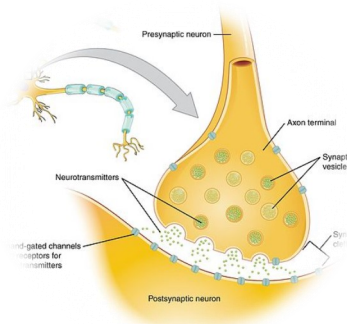
Four key neurotransmitters are critical for brain function. They are:

- Dopamine: responsible for attention, focus, pleasure, and reward
- Acetylcholine: helps you remember things
- Serotonin: the "happy" molecule. When you don't have enough, you get depressed.
- GABA: calms the brain

These four neurotransmitters (which are just examples, there are many others) are like the gas and break pedals for your nervous system—the yin and yang of your brain. Dopamine and acetylcholine are excitatory neurotransmitters (meaning they excite and stimulate you) serotonin and GABA are inhibitory neurotransmitters (meaning they slow and calm you down).

The key to being a happy, healthy, focused, attentive human being is balance. When you have a good balance of excitatory and inhibitory neurotransmitters flowing thru your system, your brain is healthy. When you don't have this balance, your brain is not healthy.

The other half of the story is protein. Specifically, the amino-acid building blocks of protein that get transformed in your body into the messengers, or neurotransmitters, which do the "talking" in your brain and throughout your body. So, if your cells are going to "hear" anything at all, they need protein to help them do it.



All protein is built from special building blocks called amino acids. The "only" function of your DNA is to take these amino acids and string them together in chains to make protein. That's all it does.

All the thousands of molecules in your body are built from only eight essential amino acids that we must get from our diet. These essential amino acids are the raw materials we use to make all our brain messenger chemicals or neurotransmitters and the receptors in our cells that transmit their messages.

The only source of these amino acids is the protein you eat in your diet.

Foods high in protein include:

- Fish, chicken, beans, nuts, seeds, omega 3 eggs and lentils.
- Cheese, bison, peas, peanut butter soybeans, oysters, chia seeds, milk



Nicci Kobritz, CEO  
Youthful Aging Home Health  
Center for Brain Health

## *The NEW Progressive In-Home Care Model*

The home care needs of individuals coming into long-term care are changing rapidly. Home care providers understand the threat cognitive and physical impairment has on the ability of our clients to perform daily activities and to continue to live independently. Frailty results from physiologic decline of the brain, endocrine, immune, and skeletal systems resulting in increased hospitalizations, decreased functional status, and eventual institutional death.

Statistics support this need for change.

- ◆ Frailty affects 7% of individuals aged 60-69 years and grows to 65% for people age 90 and older.
- ◆ One in four Americans has multiple chronic conditions, those that last a year or more and require ongoing medical attention or that limit activities of daily living. That number rises to three in four Americans after age 65.
- ◆ One in 10 people age 65 and older have Alzheimer's disease; that number grows to 82% by age 75.
- ◆ Dementia affects 14% of people age 71 and older – 70% will live at home.

While the traditional model continues to manage the progression of decline until people end up in a skilled nursing facility or memory unit, the Progressive Model facilitates greater independence, focusing on the underlying factors associated with frailty, dementia, and their progression.

The Progressive Model, through its integrated wellness program, focuses on modifiable risk factors:

- ◆ Chronic Conditions: micromanaging chronic conditions that are unstable and known to compromise the integrity of the brain.
- ◆ Prevention Screenings: sleep apnea, depression, memory, stress, vision, and hearing exams.
- ◆ Nutritional Deficiencies: nutritional analysis to include homocysteine levels, vitamin D, folate, B-12, and magnesium.
- ◆ Mediterranean Diet: increasing levels of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables that reduce silent inflammation.
- ◆ Exercise: balance and resistance training at least 20 minutes a day, 3-4 days a week.
- ◆ Cognitive Therapy: focusing on mental stimulation programs geared to stabilizing or improving short-term memory.
- ◆ Care Management: integrated into the plan of care and carried out by trained proactive caregivers who are supervised by specially trained nurses.

Beginning the process of change can be challenging for the home care provider and requires the willingness of each client to participate. The art of practicing home health begins one client at a time. As clients slowly move along the wellness continuum and improvements are experienced, routines change, and motivation improves.

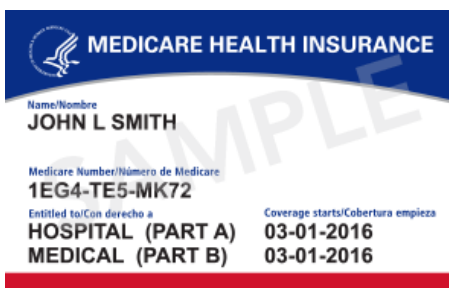
\* Statistics Reference: Alzheimer's Association; CDC; Aged and Aging

# WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

**Q** I'm getting ready to interview a private duty home care agency. What are the most important questions to ask?

## New Medicare Cards Are Coming

Your new card will have a new Medicare Number that's unique to you, instead of your Social Security Number. This will help to protect your identity.



YOUR NEW  
CARD WILL  
LOOK LIKE  
THIS

Three things to know

1. Your new card will automatically come to you. You don't need to do anything as long as your address is up to date. If you need to update your address, visit your My Social Security account.
2. Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new card right away.
3. Your new Medicare Number is a unique combination of numbers and letters. Your new number uses numbers 0 thru 9. The letters S, L, O, I, B, and Z are never used.

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### YOUTHFUL AGING HOME HEALTH

Private Duty Home Care—Serving Sarasota, Venice, Longboat Key  
Phone: **941-925-9532** Fax: 941-925-9628— Sarasota  
Phone: **941-706-2695**— Longboat Key  
[nkobritz@youthfulaging.net](mailto:nkobritz@youthfulaging.net) | [www.youthfulaging.net](http://www.youthfulaging.net)

### CENTER FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Main Office: 5602 Marquesas Circle, Ste 105 Sarasota, FL 34233  
Phone: **941-556-9900**  
Center for Brain Health: 5370 Gulf of Mexico Longboat Key, FL 34228  
Phone: **941-706-2695**

