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New research indicates that regular supplementation with DHA may improve memory and learning in older adults with mild age-related memory loss.

DHA SUPPLEMENTATION IMPROVES MEMORY IN OLDER ADULTS

Recent research published online in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association* illustrates a benefit for docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) supplementation in a clinical trial of individuals with age-related cognitive decline (ARC). DHA is a long-chain omega-3 fatty acids found most prominently in algae, fatty fish and fish oil supplements.

Participants included 485 individuals aged 55 and older with complaints of mild memory loss. The subjects were given a daily dosage of 900 milligrams of DHA or a placebo for 6 months. Memory and learning tests were given at the beginning of the study and at 12 and 24 weeks.

At the end of the study period, the group receiving the DHA supplement had improved test scores that correlated with an increase in plasma DHA levels. At 12 weeks there were no significant differences in the test scores of the two groups. However, at 24 weeks the group taking the DHA had a 2-fold reduction in the number of learning and memory errors tested compared to the placebo group.

The results of this study are the first to clinically confirm that DHA meaningfully improves memory and learning functions in healthy adults with age-related cognitive decline. Since it is estimated that up to one-third of the aging population in the U.S. will experience a decline in cognitive function with age, the benefits of a daily DHA supplement can have a significant impact on public health.

*Yurko-Mauro K, et al. Beneficial effects of docosahexaenoic acid on cognition in age-related cognitive decline. 2010. *Alzheimers Dement* [Epub ahead of print].*