

OR Conference 2012

I believe it is important to attend conference because "As an ever-changing nurse, it is important to learn" as stated by Colleen Marcotte, ORNAA President.

Conference provides a venue for learning, not only for the OR nurse, but on a more personal level.

The presenters share their knowledge and expertise which entices discussions afterwards. Not only does conference create a learning environment, but it also is a social network with your colleagues and with other nurses from different locations across Alberta. It builds on a network with industry exhibitors and of course it brings out the artistic creativity in all of us (to design the best costume). Most importantly, it

brings out a better understanding and the importance of each of us in this ever expanding and changing OR environment.

Barb Bancroft, the keynote speaker discussed "Brain Health Matters." Not only did she present her topic with facts; she infused it with much laughter coming from the room. Did you know that 220mph is the speed of a neural impulse and that 20% of Oxygen is consumed by

your 3 pound brain?

Barb suggested 10 ways to protect your brain:

1. Exercise
2. Eat right
3. Drink in moderation
4. Keep your blood pressure below 140/90
5. Check your thyroid (for hypothyroidism)
6. Consider estrogen
7. Maintain normal cholesterol levels and a healthy weight
8. Reduce stress
9. Sleep right and sleep tight
10. Stop smoking

EXERCISE

We all have heard the importance of an exercise routine, but did you know

exercise benefits you for 3 days? Your brain also benefits from exercise because of the increase in blood flow and Oxygen to the brain. There is a boost in endorphins and serotonin which we know makes us happy with increased self esteem, lots of energy, and a positive mood. There is a boost in norepinephrine in the brain which

increases energy.

Exercise decreases cortisol. Cortisol directly damages the cells of the hippocampus, which is the door in and the door out for memory and mood. It builds neurons in the brain, which maintain and improves

cognitive function. Did you want to increase your exam score by 5-10 points?

Barb suggests studying chewing gum and writing your exam chewing the same flavor of gum. The

hippocampus is the door in and the door out from memory and the cranial nerve olfactory bulb and

tract is the forepart of the hippocampus. This is where smell is received and is associated with it.

So as you write your exam, the information you studied while chewing gum will be brought to memory

while you write that exam chewing gum. It is worth a try for 5-10 extra points!

Say "yes" to meditation. Find a nice quiet environment, close your eyes, take deep breaths, relax your muscles, and through meditation you will reduce your cortisol levels and stress levels. As cortisol levels go down, the cells of the hippocampus don't get destroyed.

FOOD

Are you eating properly? Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease, and cancer share 2 common

underlying mechanisms.....inflammation and oxidation. Damaged cells from "free radicals" also known

as "oxidants" can further damage DNA and cause mutations that can lead to these diseases.

Say "YES" to fish (omega -3 fatty acids), fish oil capsules, and vegetable

based omega 3's.

Beans are potent anti-oxidants. Examples of beans are the red, black, white, navy, and pinto.

Fresh or frozen berries are top of the line anti-oxidants. Examples of these berries are blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, and boysenberries. Berries help to keep the "white matter" of the brain healthy.

Eat breakfast daily because it decreases depression, decrease stress levels and boost your concentration and mental activity.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol in small amounts are anti-inflammatory, boosts HDL's (the good cholesterol), and are antioxidants.

What constitutes 1 drink? 5 oz of wine any color (men can have 2 glasses).

Hard stuff (liquor) per day

equals 1-2 oz for women and 2-3 oz for men. One drink of beer constitutes 12 oz for women and 24 oz

for men.

BLOOD PRESSURE

Foods with potassium also decrease Blood pressure. Lower sodium and increase your potassium intake will assist in decreasing your blood pressure.

Potassium can be found in cantaloupe, apricots, and potatoes. Nuts such as walnuts, peanuts, pistachios

and almonds are high in potassium as well as calories, so portion control is important.

THYROID

Get your TSH checked starting at 35 years or earlier if you experience hypothyroidism symptoms.

Hypothyroidism in adults causes symptoms such as dull personality, depression, cognitive dysfunction

(can't find a word, other memory problems), inability to concentrate and poor attention span.

ESTROGEN

Estrogen keeps the brain healthy. Hot flashes, word finding, low energy (consider testosterone)

NORMAL CHOLESTEROL LEVELS AND HEALTHY WEIGHT

B1-2 and olive oil keeps the white matter healthy!

There is no cholesterol in vegetables and fruits; it is only found in meat.

Olive oil acts as an anti-inflammatory and cooking with it makes food taste great!

Don't be afraid to eat eggs. Eggs contain cholesterol but not the bad stuff.

Eggs contain good proteins called choline which boosts acetylcholine, the neurotransmitter of cognition

(THINKING).

Decrease hotdogs, burgers and fries and other pro-inflammatory foods.

What does weight gain have to do with the brain? If you increase your weight, especially around the middle, you can become insulin resistant. The best way to lose weight is to eat right and decrease portions. 85% is portion control and 15% is exercise.

Fries are the #1 food that put on the pounds. #2 is chips, #3 is red meat, #4 is soda pop, and #5 is mashed potatoes.

STRESS

Stress is a brain hazard. Our ability to manage stress is important. Small amount of stress can actually be beneficial. Stressors are also different for everyone and how you handle that stress makes a big difference.

Suggestions to decrease stress are: to do a little dance, or make a little love. (burn 5-12 calories with a kiss) Adding a bit of humor also decreases the stress response. Laughter decreases cortisol, boosts endorphins, and gives your muscles a workout, and sends more oxygen to the brain.

Hang out with people that make you happy and practice the emotional contagion theory. When you see people happy, it makes you happy. It mirrors neurons "monkey see, monkey do"

Negativity is contagious. Bad attitudes and negative attitudes are contagious. So avoid that negativity!

Reduce stress by getting a pet. Having a pet around or even just thinking about a pet helps to generate more goals, feel more confident about achieving objectives and handle stress better. Bonding with pets is important. Studies have shown that oxytocin levels almost double in people and in dogs when humans talk to and stroke their canine friends. Oxytocin is the chemical responsible for social bonding in humans.

STEEP

Get plenty of sleep. Ideally get 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night. If you are a 'napper', that contributes to the total time of your sleep time.

Getting enough sleep keeps the brain healthy by increasing melatonin which boosts your immune system. It decreases stress which will increase serotonin (happy) and norepinephrine (energy) levels.

Sleep will increase memory and decreases appetite. Sleep helps with the decision making process so if you have a big decision to make, sleep on it!

SMOKING

Replace self destructive coping mechanisms such as smoking with a positive healthy alternative. Get

outside and enjoy the fresh air! Sun boosts endorphins and builds up Vitamin D. Spending 10-15 minutes

3 to 4 times a week (without sunscreen) builds up Vitamin D. People with the lowest Vitamin D levels

have a high risk of depression. SAD (Seasonal affective disorder) can be seen in the Northern climates.

To end her presentation, creating laughter in the room, Barb suggested taking the pill, "FUKITALL."

I haven't been able to find the pill that Barb mentioned. However, after attending conference I continue to share and apply the knowledge I gained. Our brain matters and "thinking on our feet" is important in

the OR environment as well as our personal lives. Learning to look after our brain which we don't often think about... is extremely important! I sincerely thank the Barb Bancroft's' of the world that encourage learning with laughter (increasing endorphins and decreasing stress). It makes conference a superior learning environment and ultimately supports cognitive function!

Submitted By Deborah Kohut