

Caspar ([00:01](#)):

Aging is a natural part of life. But do you ever feel like your brain is aging faster than the rest of us today? We're speaking with Jenn Parker, one of our wonderful writers at Innovative Medicine and a nutrition and wellness advocate about a recent article she wrote on the subject for a closer look at how we can healthily age and the ways we can improve brain function or reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Jenn, thank you so much for joining us.

Jenn ([00:26](#)):

Oh, thank you so much for having me. It's my first podcast. I'm very excited.

Caspar ([00:30](#)):

Your first one. All right. Let's make it as enjoyable as possible. And I have to say, I really enjoyed the article and that's why I really want you on, because I do think this is such an important topic and the name of that article was Early Signs of Cognitive Decline and Resources to Improve Brain Function. Can you really quickly tell us, because you've done many articles like this for, for us, we love all of them. I think they always nail it and really give us better insight into the brain. This really complex thing that we know really so little about. But can you give us, what did the research on this article show you about cognitive decline?

Jenn ([01:09](#)):

Well, I think the thing that was kind of surprising is just how much it's not connected to aging, right? Like, like I think when people think of cognitive decline, it immediately goes to like, oh, that's just what happens when you get old. And eventually it's going to happen to all of us. And if you live old and long enough that you'll get to a state where your brain is just not working anymore and that's not true at all. And then I also think too, that cognitive decline, isn't always something that's chronic, you know, that it can happen in a very acute state, such as brain fog. And then the other thing was how much we can do to really prevent cognitive decline or to kind of restore and come back from those states through our lifestyle and things that we have a lot of control over. You know, I think when we think of brain health issues, it seems that it's out of our control. You know, I hope it just doesn't happen to me, but we do, we have immense control over the way that we age, the way that we function, the way that we heal and all the research kind of pointed to that.

Caspar ([02:20](#)):

Yeah. One of the things I picked up is they are really kind of four main types of cognitive decline. It's not that you just lump it all together. Can you go into that and what you wrote about in the article there?

Jenn ([02:32](#)):

Sure. So the first one I kind of wrote about was brain fog and it is basically what it sounds like that feeling that your brain is foggy and slow and that really basic cognitive functions like thinking and understanding comprehending information just seems to be happening at a really subpar level. And that brain fog while it's kind of categorized in as cognitive decline often is a symptom of some other underlying issue that's going on. It's very much associated with chronic Lyme disease and MS. Chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic stress, even iron deficiency, sleep disorders. And so I think when you experience brain fog, it's time to kind of look a little bit deeper and see like what's, you know, what's causing that what's happening here. And then the next one is mild cognitive impairment. And that is

kind of when the state of decline or impairment is a bit greater than you would expect for an individual's age or development.

Jenn ([03:43](#)):

And while it doesn't typically stop people from performing everyday tasks or taking care of themselves, it does affect their lives. And it can affect things like social behavior or personality, or even just simple choices like eating habits. And then from there we go to the one that I think most people associate with aging is dementia, which is not a normal part of aging. And the main difference between that one and cognitive mild cognitive impairment is that individuals with dementia often have a really difficult time or even a total inability to carry out everyday tasks. And then from there we go into subjective cognitive decline, and this is a self-reported worsening or more frequent events of confusion or forgetfulness. And this one typically is a little bit more associated with the aging population. And I believe the statistic was around 11% of people, 65 and over report subjective, cognitive decline at various stages. And, but it also is one of the early signs of Alzheimer's disease.

Caspar ([04:59](#)):

Yeah.

Jenn ([05:00](#)):

Yeah. So yeah, those are the four main ones that I came across. And I, I know that there's a bunch of other ones that maybe just don't have a specific name and it's kind of more based on symptoms.

Caspar ([05:11](#)):

Yeah. You know, we, we saw when at the clinic, when you talk to patients, is that basically everyone has some sort of cognitive decline, regardless of the diagnosis. Like you mentioned, Lyme is a big one. We see a lot of that at our clinic and you definitely have that brain fog and, and severe kind of cognitive impairment, but across the board, even when you had, let's say a gastrointestinal pros or IBS, you know, ulcerative colitis, all of that, that also impaired. So it's such a common thing these days, but I also feel like the normalization of cognitive decline that you're going to get it, is so off and that's, that's totally really unsettling. And again, now it's become a post COVID symptom, right long haulers. Are you, you may have brain fog yeah. In your research. Did you see anything that actually backs that up? Or should we be looking at maybe the underlying factors of isolation as part of that?

Jenn ([06:10](#)):

Well, in the research that I was doing for the articles that I had written for Innovative Medicine, weren't super focused on COVID, but I personally think it could be a result of both. You know, I think there's so much information and research out there about social isolation and mental health and that correlation and mental health also being directly related to cognitive decline. You know, individuals who are really suffering with depression or anxiety or trauma can report things similar to brain fog or just this inability to focus and get things done and be productive and creative. And then aside from just social isolation, I think with COVID, you know, in the very early stages of it. And then also when, when, if you get it, is that isolation from being outside and that disconnect from fresh air and the sun and nature. And I think too, there's plenty of research that kind of directly connects, you know, not getting enough sunshine and time outside with mental health as well.

Jenn ([07:19](#)):

But then on the other side of the spectrum, you know, does it relate to the actual infection? And I think that's really possible as well because we see that with chronic Lyme disease, for an example, that when the body is fighting an infection and trying to heal, it's this major energy suck, right. Of like the body trying to come back to this wonderful state of homeostasis and maintain that. And, you know, I think too, when you are sick, there's also the mental side of that as well of, you know, feeling, you know, you feel terrible and you're not being able to do the things that you wanna do. And maybe somebody who has long COVID and is dealing with that for a long period of time. I mean, I think that could get you pretty down. And I think too, it doesn't necessarily even have to be connected to long COVID.

Jenn ([08:11](#)):

Like I recently had COVID for the first and hopefully only time and was miserable for a week. I was so sick and totally isolated, you know, to keep my family safe, who didn't have it. And ironically, that's at the end of that, that's when I was writing this article about cognitive decline and it took me, you know, three times as long as it should have to write it because I just was slow. I had major brain fog. And even after I came out of COVID and was testing negative again for several weeks, I felt that way where it was just taking me a lot longer to do things. And so I think it's the result of, like you said, being connected to other, you know, patients coming in with a whole array of issues and everybody kind of having some form of cognitive decline in their journey from sickness to health.

Caspar ([09:06](#)):

Well, there are so many factors involved and it's like any disease, you know, you can't just put it on one thing that it's a virus or it's just the pathogen or it's, you know, anything else it's, even as we know toxins, there are tons of neurotoxins out there. They are just in the air, in our food, in our water, everything

Jenn ([09:23](#)):

Fluoride.

Caspar ([09:24](#)):

Right. It's, it's kinda wild how much we got going against us, but I will say, and again, you said this and I'm looking at that beautiful backdrop of nature that I believe that the isolation and in general, just the, the amount of people that are indoors for such long hours. I know it. Yeah. And I, I was sick and I, I don't know, I didn't test myself. It might have been the flu. It might have been who cares? You're sick. I knew I'd get over. In a sense. I wasn't bad, but you know, you're isolate. I did isolate myself indoors, lots of rest. Your brain starts to get a little cabin fever itself and then.

Caspar ([10:01](#)):

And then when I was just recently traveling and I was in Europe and going outdoors a lot and spending most of the day, hiking around waterfalls, beautiful things in nature, I just felt clear, you know, it's it's as if everything, when I was indoors, I did feel brain fog and sluggish mentally. And it did feel like it was a cognitive decline temporarily.

Jenn ([10:23](#)):

Yeah.

Caspar ([10:24](#)):

But the opposite happened when I got myself into nature into that fresh air.

Jenn ([10:27](#)):

That's amazing into the movie.

Caspar ([10:29](#)):

Yeah. Even there is, of course, the science of negative ions, the science of, of being around and biophilic design, all these things. Yeah. That show us that it has this great impact. But if you were to sit down with someone after doing your research after talking and saying, Hey, here are the tips. I know you can't go into the jungles of Panama. Like you are right now and, and get that connection. You may be in this city and you may, you know, what would be some of the tips for improving brain health?

Jenn ([10:59](#)):

Well, I think one and this just being, you know, something I'm so passionate about is just nutrition. And the wonderful thing about eating for brain health is it's again, it's eating for the whole body, right? Like the brain's up here in this whole trickle down effect that takes place. So when you really focus in, on taking care of your brain, you are taking care of everything. And so you have to think about things like, okay, well, what is your brain craving? And one omega-3 fatty acids. And so, okay. So maybe you incorporate some fish into your diet or as someone who doesn't eat fish, there's so many other wonderful ways to get it in the form of chia seeds and flax seeds and hemp seeds and, and, you know, thinking about, okay, well, where are the fish getting their omega-3s from? It's from their diet, they're eating, you know, algae and phytoplankton or throughout the food chain that's accumulating.

Jenn ([11:59](#)):

And of course we want all the B vitamins. We want vitamin C and iron and zinc and iodine. And so really focusing in on, uh, like very nutrient-dense, whole food nutrition, you know, and I found this really cool study. I think I linked it in one of the articles. I wrote that there was a study of 104 people, and they used blood biomarkers and MRI scans to look at brain volume. And they found there was this incredibly strong connection between nutrition and brain health. And what it, what kind of came out was that people who had high levels of B, C, D E vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids scored much higher on cognitive tests than those who had biomarkers very high in trans fats. So I think diet is something, especially if you're living in an urban metropolitan area, you have access right. To choices of really great things that you can eat.

Jenn ([12:58](#)):

And then just kind of lifestyle stuff like really paying attention to sleep and exercising and having social connections. And even if you're not a highly social person, you know, it doesn't mean you have to be around a lot of people, but having those, you know, those relationships and then intellectual stimulation, you know, exercise the brain like adopt that philosophy of just be a lifelong learner and writing for Innovative Medicine is like my exercise in this department. Cause sometimes there's topics that I only really know, you know, the surface about and have to really dive deep into academic and medical journals and try to teach myself so I can teach the readers, you know, what I'm learning and it's challenging. And, but I feel it at the end, there's all of a sudden, it feels like you worked out for something that you got stronger and having some digital detoxes step away from the screens limit your blue screen time. And then I'll say, I mean, really simple things like incorporating herbs that are really good for, for brain health, like Cats Claw, and Gotu Kola, and Bacopa, you know, things found in

Nadovim, you know, it's, it's lifestyle things. It's all things that you have control to influence and kind of bring into your life. And then if you can go outside, get outside, get in nature. Somehow even green spaces in a city, you know, it doesn't have to be the jungle.

Caspar ([14:33](#)):

Yeah, no, I mean, listen, the jungle is awesome if you could get into it, but of course, a park anywhere where there is a tree even looking at leaves, right. I found this because I do work in front of a screen for long hours sometimes, and it's not good. I know it. Yeah. Uh, the fact that I can even step away and not focus on something there, but a great, like a whole tree or just the leaves and kind of, you know, switch it because my eyes get strained. I mean, I wear the blue blockers and everything half the time, but that strain alone is exhausting. That's like an energy suck. And I was actually talking to a practitioner today that said, if you are a racer or someone that that is always, you know, going very fast, let's say F1 racer, the most important thing you could do is have strong eyes that aren't strained. Cause if they're strain the brain perceives that as you, you can't pick up movements as quickly and it's fight or flight, you get more of a stress response and drain the brain more.

Jenn ([15:30](#)):

Interesting.

Caspar ([15:30](#)):

Yeah. It was really interesting to hear that he's worked with like racers and people like hockey player that have to move very quickly. And you focus on that on not like things in front of you, but larger pictures and give your eyes a little bit more that break, but also clearing them up and then you could become fast and your brain works even better that way. So little tips like that, even.

Jenn ([15:52](#)):

Yeah, that makes, I mean, it makes sense.

Caspar ([15:55](#)):

There because the fact is that you wanna do two things. You wanna remove things that impact the brain negatively. And then you also want to add in things that are going to of course support the brain. So I do think one of those that we're seeing a lot of that I, you know, we both brought up here is technology. And I do think digital detox are so necessary. I found it when I'm looking at the phone a lot and getting the pings and it's not on airplane mode. I feel it going faster, my brain downwards towards that lack of energy towards that almost fatigue of everything. And it's too many inputs, but to someone that is on the job, let's say to someone that is always looking at the screen and everything, uh, and looking to not just improve the brain, but looking at it from that aging to, to, you know, have longevity of the brain. Is there anything that you saw in, in the research, in other articles you wrote? I, I was actually gonna point maybe something even like a Spermidine not even Nadovim, but you wrote an article on Spermidine. are there things like that that they can incorporate knowing you're probably gonna be nine hours at your job and looking at a screen, you can't get around that?

Jenn ([17:02](#)):

Totally. And that article was actually really interesting because I actually knew nothing about spermidine. So I really went deep on that one and it was cool because it's something that can be found in all plants and animals and including us, but as we start to age and I think starting at like 25, those

natural levels start to decline. Yeah. And what was being seen in research is that a deficiency and it was actually being linked to expedited aging of the cells and age-related conditions. And that spermidine was really important for cellular processes like DNA stability and cellular growth, but then the like gold star on it was its ability to promote autophagy, which I like very, I knew very little about this. I kind of remembered this from biology class, but then had to relearn myself that this process, which is incredible is it allows ourselves to adapt to stress and to mobilize their energetic reserves and to remove toxin proteins from the cells.

Jenn ([18:13](#)):

And that there is this correlation between an autophagic flux and improved health and potentially longevity and kind of linking to that. I wrote once about fasting. And that was one of the other benefits of adopting a fasting process is the potential to induce autophagy through fasting. And so replenishing those natural levels, you know, to support your immune system and cell detoxifying and regeneration. And, you know, it's, I think all those things promote a potentially longer life where you age gracefully, right. Is the, is the hope. And so I think something like that falls under that category of nutrition, because as those levels decline, you can replenish them through your diet. And there's lots of really great food that's actually rich in spermidine and some of my favorites, including broccoli and green peas. And I think the other and whole grains was another one that was really rich.

Jenn ([19:17](#)):

And then I know when I was writing that one that I believe that the New York Center for Innovative Medicine was carrying the Spermidine Life, that the supplement. Yeah. And so, you know, that's another approach as well of, you know, if you're not getting it all from your diet or even just to kind of supplement that. And that's the cool thing about, you know, like researching more about brain health of these little things. So like, of course that would help, I think with brain restoration and strength, because it goes back to supporting your cell's abilities and your body's ability to do what it was designed to do. Right. Function for the length of whatever our life is supposed to be. And because like you were talking about as well, there's so many things working against us, it's really important to then try to figure out things to do to just counteract that and support what we're meant to do.

Caspar ([20:17](#)):

Right. And I think you brought it up there, the cell it's so important to have proper cellular function and look at cell health, they are the building blocks of us. Right. We're just trillions of cells that are producing trillions of different chemical reactions that keep us alive every second. Yeah. And they can do what we do. And our brain is really, really important for that. It's our CPU, it's everything. So if you could look at how you could impact the cell in a simple way, whether it is spermidine, whether it is NAD I mean, honestly, when I just did that, NAD infusion, you felt it, you felt like you had this kind of, that. This energy, but not at all, like caffeine, it wasn't this spike in like jittery or anything like that. It just felt kind of like you're having a really good day of like, just energy's going, things are working well.

Caspar ([21:05](#)):

Yeah. Just, you have no need for any caffeine or anything there aren't like slumps and everything. I feel like that's how we should normally feel at any age basically. And of course, understanding as we age that's part of life. And, and yes, we will be impacted by that. But our, our brain should really operate just like a CPU should without any problems. You know it continues to do we're on our computers right now. Mine's an old computer. I took care of it in a way I got, you know, clean it out. Don't do much. Right. And

then I see people and I, I have this at work where they come to me and they're just like, Hey, this new computer's really slow. I'm like, what are you doing to it? Like how you keeping that healthy, because that's be much better than mine, but it's not.

Caspar ([21:45](#)):

The brain is a CPU in that way. And we have to recognize that and contribute to its health with these little things, which just diet, which is exercise. Of course, like all of these things, when you look at brain health, to me, it's just health. And then you look at the importance of the brain and all it does, and that kind of changes the complexity, but not the situation. You still need to, you look at it as, what am I doing to fuel the overall health of this. And in many ways it is simple is better. Right. It is get in nature, meditation, breathing, eat, right. Move all of that. So yeah. If, if you were to take, give like a takeaway from, from the recent articles you wrote on kind of brain health, what would be like the top three things you want to share with people?

Jenn ([22:31](#)):

Well, I think first, just really embracing that your brain is your most valuable asset, right? And so I think when all the sudden you just come to terms with that, the way that you move forward in taking care of it, it's a little bit different. And so I think the thing, the takeaway really is that it's in our control, like our health is in our control where these amazing, you know, these amazing organisms that are so complex, but it's all figured out for us. Right? Like, all we have to do is just the really simple things that we talked about to keep us going. Like, I mean the amount of things that happen while you're sleeping and all those involuntary processes, like we're not thinking about those things, as a gift, right? So in return in gratitude for all those things that are happening inside, I mean, yeah.

Jenn ([23:28](#)):

It's lifestyle, it's really, it's simple. And like you said, simple is, is better. And just not giving into this idea, right. That, that cognitive decline is just part of life and that it's just gonna happen to you. I mean, sure. There's like very, you know, there is some degree of cognitive decline that happens as you age and that's, you know, totally normal, but, you can be very functional for your whole life. It's just taking care of your, your mind, body, soul, and realizing it's all connected, you know, focus in on the brain and you're focusing in on everything, which makes it even easier.

Caspar ([24:09](#)):

Absolutely. And it's so vitally important. I feel like we kind of just abuse our brains these days. Right. We let it rot we go on these Netflix kind of, you know, marathons where the brain just sits there. And it's, it's, it's unfortunate because we put such a premium on looks on going to the gym and that's great. I love to work out, take care of, you know, right. Lose fat. Like that's beautiful. What are you doing to work out your mind? What are your brain? Yeah. Right. What do you, what are you stimulating it with on a daily basis? That's so important. Cause the truth is, just like muscles, if you just sit around you, atrophy, they'll be. You'll be weak. You'll be, you know, frail, the, the brain is so important to work out. Like you said, like intellectually and all these things and do everything. So I think that that's a wonderful message for this, you know, such a complex and, and kind of vital vital organ that makes us who we are. So Jenn, what, what articles are you working on now?

Jenn ([25:06](#)):

Um, right now, actually I have another one related to cognitive health coming up on the causes of cognitive decline that the latest one coming. And I think I just had one published about creating your own healing sanctuary.

Caspar ([25:22](#)):

Oh, I like that one too. That was a big one. That was my, my idea to start with.

Jenn ([25:27](#)):

Cause I love it. I loved writing it.

Caspar ([25:29](#)):

I was feng shuing this apartment a little bit and I was like, you know, there's so many things in here I do to try and make it more of a healing sanctuary in the middle of a big city. Right. And I was like, we gotta share some of this and go further. So thank you for putting that out there to the world.

Jenn ([25:43](#)):

I loved writing that one.

Caspar ([25:45](#)):

Cause that too, that too, I will say too many people live in cluttered houses and a cluttered house is a cluttered mind. Absolutely. So like that idea minimalism is huge for brain health, I have to say. And I think too many of us hang on to a lot of shit and it, it shows in here after a while.

Jenn ([26:03](#)):

Totally. Yeah. So I, I agree, Jenn.

Caspar ([26:06](#)):

Awesome. Awesome. Talking to you and, and amazing work you're doing and you know, keep it up. Oh, thank you. Where can people learn more about you aside from the Innovative Medicine articles you write?

Jenn ([26:16](#)):

Um, well I have a website, but right. It's just kind of my running portfolio of things that I've had published as well as some of my photography. And that is just Parker Jenn with two Ns.com. Awesome. Jenn Parker is a very common name. So that website URL was taken.

Caspar ([26:33](#)):

Very smart. I totally get it. Uh, Jen, one more thing before I let you go. Um, your love of sharks that I am the opposite. Tell me how Jaws, how watching Jaws. You said impacted you to actually appreciate sharks. Whereas for me, I am dead. Like this is a running joke with my friends. I don't go in the ocean that much. I don't go near like, I'm always, like I saw too many shark weeks they're out there and I, I no not doing it, but why, why sharks?

Jenn ([27:01](#)):

I have no idea. Like, I, I mean, I think Jaws did what happened to you to most people, but for some reason, and I probably watched that movie when I was too young too. I mean, I was in elementary school and I remember getting to pick out the, the video at the video rental store before Netflix and all of that. And I just fell. Yeah. I just fell in love. Like it's the movie that I wanted to watch over and over. Like I just, I don't know, it sparked something in me and then just kind of ran away with that and growing up in Florida where it's so Sharky and growing up, diving in free diving and being a surfer and just feeling some really great connection and, and the fact that we really need them, you know, we do, if we don't have them, everything collapses in the ocean, so we need more shark love out there.

Caspar ([27:56](#)):

We do. We do. I, I mean, my shark fear is not like anti sharks. It's just a unfounded fear and I wish nothing but love. So. But it it goes to show how different people and different brains perceive things differently. And that's a beautiful story. Totally. And that you just kept cultivating that amazing, so much left to the sharks and much love

Jenn ([28:15](#)):

To thank you so much

Caspar ([28:17](#)):

For coming on. And

Jenn ([28:18](#)):

Absolutely thank you for having me.

Caspar ([28:20](#)):

Yeah. And like we said, aging is just a part of life. However, definitely, doesn't need to mean that we have to say goodbye to mental prowess. As we get older, there are many things we could do to control our, uh, brains as we age. And, you know, I hope you got something out of this with Jenn's work, keep reading all her articles on innovativemedicine.com and uh, you know, we'll continue this conversation down the line until next time. Keep writing your own healing story. Thanks again, Jenn.