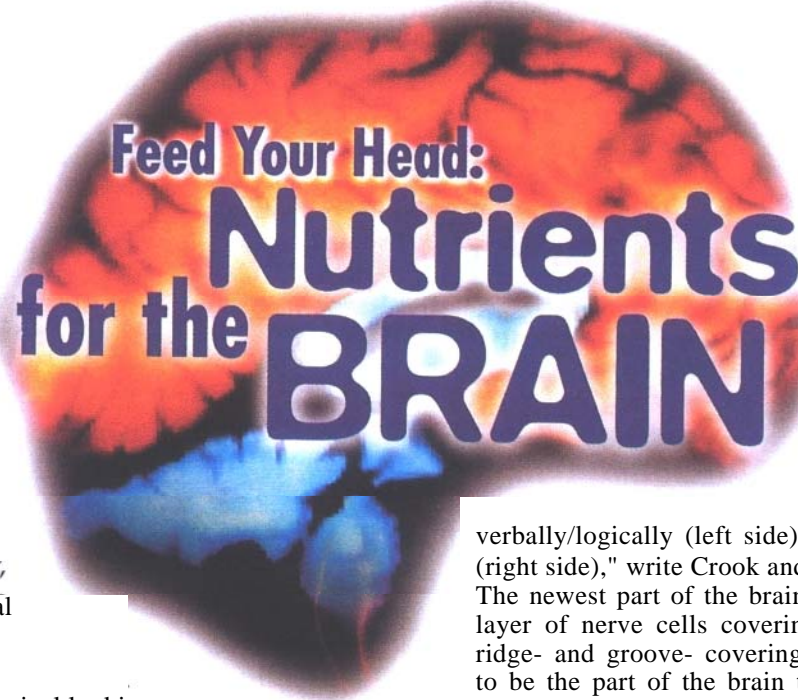


VITAMIN RETAILER

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STRUCTURE / FUNCTION



Feed Your Head: Nutrients for the BRAIN

By Lisa Schofield

It can be thought of as Command Central, for the brain is responsible for all voluntary and involuntary actions, memory, learning, emotions and random thoughts that lead to new inventions or fleeting smiles. It is also responsible for the nocturnal life we experience through dreams.

The human brain is a comical looking structure, but its power and capabilities are awesome. Keeping this organ in optimum health will ensure mental liveliness throughout life. The cerebrum, the largest part of the brain, is divided into two hemispheres, each governs the opposite side of the body. "The hemispheres are connected by the corpus callosum, a band of some 300 million nerve fibers, which tends to be larger in females.

The cerebrum permits us to develop our two most prominent and distinct ways of thinking:

verbally/logically (left side) and visually/spatially (right side)," write Crook and Adderley.

The newest part of the brain, the cortex, in a thin layer of nerve cells covering the cerebrum. This ridge- and groove- covering has been determined to be the part of the brain that allows humans to analyze incoming information, compare new data

with stored information, organize experiences, and to make decisions, the authors point out.

The brain is comprised of four lobes (frontal, parietal, occipital and temporal); each is responsible for processing sensory functions such as memory, vision and abstract reasoning.

VINCA

New on the scene are vinpocetine and vincamine, which are vinca alkaloids derived from an extract of the periwinkle plant. Vinpocetine, incidentally, is actually a derivative of vincamine. According to information supplied by ClubNatural, vinpocetine has been shown through research to be the superior vinca alkaloid, and it has been demonstrated to be a cerebral metabolic enhancer as well as a selective cerebral vasodilator. "Vinpocetine improves cerebral blood flow, increases glucose and oxygen levels used in the brain, reduces platelet aggregation and improves red blood cells deformability," the literature explains.

Vinpocetine's relative, vincamine, is said to be used as a cerebral vasodilator for enhancing mental alertness; it increases blood flow to the brain and thus improves oxygenation.

Yatcilla noted there there are a number of studies showing the beneficial effects of vincamine on stroke vic

tims' recovery times, and for patients suffering from dementia. "Also, in a multi-center study, long-term improvement in mental function for patients with moderate cerebrovascular insufficiency was observed from taking vincamine," he related.

Source Naturals, Scotts Valley, CA, last year introduced its Vincamine in 30 mg. potencies. The company noted its vincamine is derived from the lesser periwinkle plant, and from additional botanicals such as *Voaconga* spp. and *Crocera longiflorus*.

Natural Balance's new Memory 2000, said Smith, "combines cutting-edge brain nutrients. It includes therapeutic amounts of ginkgo biloba extract and PS in amounts proven to work in clinical studies. We added an exciting new ingredient, vinpocetine, a cerebral activator which actually energizes the brain. Although the mechanisms of action for ginkgo, PS and vinpocetine are slightly different, they do complement one another."