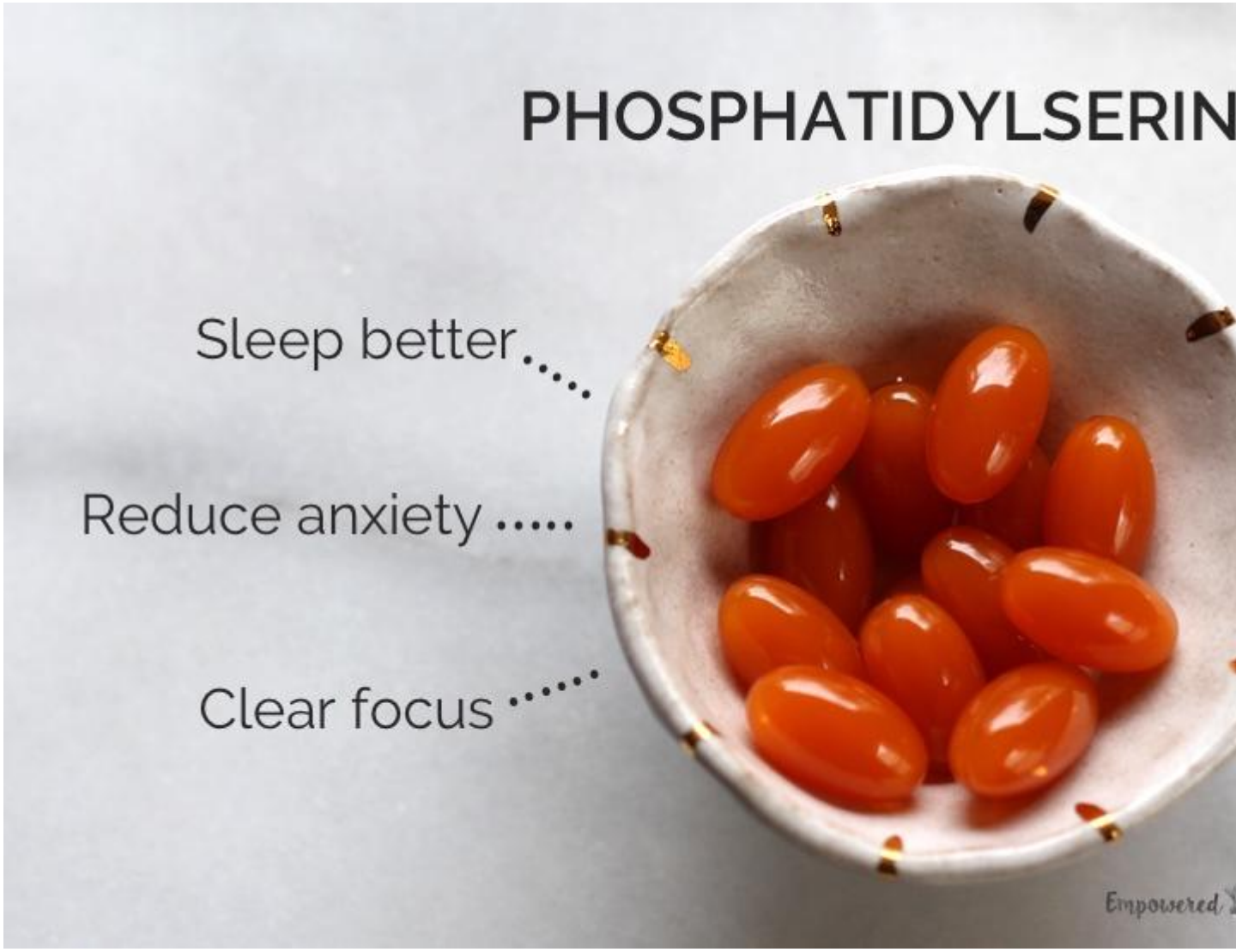
Phosphatidylserine: The Brain Nutrient That Changed My Life



Medication submerged my personality

I empowered myself with nutrition at age 19 in order to eliminate pharmaceutical drugs from my life. At this young age, I had already been on countless drugs to manage my **“incurable” disease**. I was taking drugs to treat the side effects of those drugs.

This medication cocktail made my mind a foreign inhabitant of my body. My moods, thoughts, and behavior escaped my command. I had the body of a teenager, but often had the emotional control of a toddler. I felt ashamed, angry, disoriented. I have never been more distanced from my soul.

I offer this introduction to make this point: **it’s not outrageous to claim that a nutrient alters personality and even transforms the experience of life**. Medication does, as you see. The difference is that mood-altering medication rarely empowers, and it often submerges the soul. Nutrition does empower, and it often surfaces the soul.

How phosphatidylserine changed my life

Phosphatidylserine is a supplement that changed how I live in my body. I credit it for helping me reduce personality patterns that did not serve me.

- It improved my ability to focus my creative energies
- It helped me override patterns of anxiety and anxiety-induced insomnia
- It helped me reduce physical restlessness

I’ve supplemented with phosphatidylserine for a year now. In this post, I will share my personal experience as well as the research-backed effects of this powerful brain nutrient.

What does phosphatidylserine do?

Phosphatidylserine is a type of fat found in every cell of the human body, but most

concentrated in brain tissue. **It enables the brain to use glucose (blood sugar) more efficiently**. Glucose is brain fuel, and when the brain has better access to fuel, it thinks better.

In addition to glucose mediation, phosphatidylserine orchestrates balanced cortisol levels. The adrenal glands produce cortisol in a circadian rhythm: this hormone should peak in the morning and then gradually decrease until evening.

When our cortisol levels fall out of this pattern, the body loses equilibrium. Chronic stress levels cause the adrenal glands to pump out mega-doses of cortisol, which then desensitize two parts of the brain called the *hypothalamus* and the *hippocampus*. These act as the shut-off valves for cortisol. When they become desensitized, cortisol levels go haywire.

This illustrates the cycle of hormone resistance: excessive production of a certain hormone causes cells to become overwhelmed, and the cells down-regulate their response to that hormone. Now, the body produces even more of this hormone, because it is not getting into cells. **Phosphatidylserine rebalances high cortisol not by blocking the production, but by re-sensitizing the hypothalamus and hippocampus to this hormone. (Source**, **source**)

My experience with phosphatidylserine benefits

Phosphatidylserine helped me become still.

Although I never received a diagnosis of hyperactivity as a child, perhaps because I was born just before that was a fad, I was a hyper and active little creature. Growing up, I danced myself dizzy, ran frenzies around the house, and required tactile projects to keep my buzzing fingers busy. (Actually, I held to these habits until very recently.)

As a young adult, my high energy effusively fed my creativity but also my Type-A tendencies, a pattern from which I'm actively recovering. In addition, I realized my challenge of fully relaxing into my body. For example, one romantic partner brought to my attention that I would reach my *cuddling limit* when **my pent-up energy from staying still needed to escape.**

While I attribute my energy patterns partly to the innate personality of my physiology, I've learned that my high cortisol levels were partly to blame. High cortisol occurs in a state of hyper-adrenia, which is the opposite of **adrenal fatigue**. Individuals may be predisposed to either type of adrenal dysfunction or, in my case, may experience alternating periods of both. I plan to write a post discussing this in more detail.

When I began taking phosphatidylserine, I arrived into the full relaxation of my body. I could be still and present, without feeling a build-up of energy. And, for the first time in my life after age 2, I could take a nap. Now, if I feel deeply fatigued or brain fried during the day, I can rejuvenate my body and mind with a power nap.

Phosphatidylserine calmed anxiety

Have you heard the term monkey mind? This Bhuddist term references the mind chatter that fidgets from one branch of thought to the next. I lived most of my life with chronic anxiety that felt like a circus worth of monkeys in my mind.

I feel compelled to write a future post about my recovery from anxiety, a struggle which I've not addressed here. In short, I unknowingly suffered anxiety and only realized it once I had recovered.

Phosphatidylserine partly provided the foundation for me to incorporate other anxiety-healing tools. **By significantly supporting my focus and stillness, it made a meditation practice more**

accessible and less intimidating to me. I felt a deeper control of those restless, rambunctious monkeys in my mind.

Another crucial aspect in my recovery from anxiety is Anxiety Release, a formulation from my company Meo Energetics. This essential oil blend works energetically to balance the part of the brain (the *anterior cingulate gyrus*) that can get stuck processing the same negative thoughts.

Clinical research supports the anxiety-relieving effects of phosphatidylserine. Research shows that it may reduce the intensity of stress and could promote the production of dopamine, a "happy brain chemical." (**Source**, **source**)

Phosphatidylserine improved my sleep

Over the years, I've vastly improved my lifelong pattern of insomnia with tools such as my **melatonin glasses**, my **intelliBED non-toxic mattress**, and wind-down bedtime rituals (reading and meditation).

Even with these resources, insomnia still intruded into my life when I was out of my sleep routine. For example, my hormones and stress levels continued to throw off my sleep patterns. I also struggled to fall asleep when traveling.

Phosphatidylserine provided a stillness in my body and mind which radically improved my sleep. This supplement, by re-sensitizing my body to cortisol, **allowed me to access a quiet and lovely lethargy when I went to bed.**

Other phosphatidylserine benefits

ADD and ADHD – When it comes to addressing the widespread diagnosis of hyperactivity in children, nutrition and supplementation

offer drastic results without the side effects of pharmaceutical drugs. Again, this topic requires a future article. Phosphatidylserine has been used to address ADD and ADHD (**source**, **source**). Given my own experience with grounding my energy and calming my anxiety, I believe this supplement should be used with both holistic and conventional treatments for hyperactivity.

Weight loss – In excess levels, cortisol triggers the body to store belly fat. The cortisol drop from phosphatidylserine often supports healthy, long-term weight loss. I can't speak to this effect, but I didn't desire weight loss.

Memory -Phosphatidylserine is a popular subject in memory and Alzheimer's research. Although studies show mixed results, there is compelling research to suggest phosphatidylserine supports memory function, perhaps by improving levels of acetylcholine. Acetylcholine is a neurotransmitter involved in learning and memory, and Alzheimer's correlates with a shortage of this crucial brain messenger. (**Source**, **Source**, **Source**)

Exercise endurance and recovery – Clinical research supports the use of phosphatidylserine for exercise recovery and reducing the physiological consequences of overtraining. It also suggests that phosphatidylserine improves endurance levels during high-intensity activity. (**Source**, **source**)

My experience dosing phosphatydlserine

The optimal dose of phosphatidylserine varies from individual to individual. **Fortunately, you can easily find your ideal dose with awareness of your energy level and symptoms.**

It took me two weeks of small adjustments to optimally dose phosphatidylserine. I started with three capsules daily, one at 12pm, one at 3pm, and one before bed. I discovered that my body was very

sensitive to the supplement, and taking it in the afternoon made me too tired. Many people, however, thrive with this 3-times-daily dose schedule.

Now, I take two capsules two hours prior to bedtime. **This allows the phosphatidylserine to hit my system when I'm ready to sleep.**

Remember, phosphatidylserine often reduces cortisol levels. Cortisol plays a crucial role in your energy level, and should peak in the morning. It is often recommended to take your first dose of phosphatidylserine after 12pm or later in the day.