

# Alzheimer's – Rosemary Improves Memory

By *Stasia Bliss*



*“There’s rosemary, that’s for remembrance: pray you, love, remember.”*

-Hamlet

Have you ever had trouble remembering people’s names? How about finding yourself embarrassed for missing an important holiday or just plain forgetting where you put something?

Well, there may be a simple remedy for all of these complaints found inside your very own spice cupboard. Not only is rosemary a delicious kitchen ingredient used to spruce up dishes such as potato salad, chicken and pasta, apparently it is also good for the memory. Studies have shown that using rosemary can increase the memory by up to 75%. This includes remembering certain tasks, important dates, such as birthdays and anniversaries, as well as remembering names and information someone told you.

Rosemary may also become useful in preventing and treating Alzheimer’s disease in the near future. Researchers have discovered that certain phytochemicals in the herb prevent the degradation of acetylcholine, an important brain chemical needed for normal neurotransmission. A deficiency of this chemical is commonly seen in Alzheimer’s patients.

The compounds and constituents in rosemary have already been proven to enhance long-term memory, raise alertness levels as well as strengthen mental arithmetic. Just a simple whiff of the crushed herb or a sniff of rosemary essential oil before engaging any new task or ‘trying to remember’ can do the trick. Ancient Greek scholars wore garlands of rosemary to assist them

during their studies and exams. Wouldn't that be a cute new tactic for high school students to implement?

Rosemary has been used in marriages both for the couple as well as the supporting crowd.

Added to the bride and groom's wine or other beverage, rosemary is said to help the husband and wife remember their vows. For the people attending the special occasion, sprigs of rosemary were to assist them in remembering the event – either with the invitation or at the actual wedding. It used to be a custom in some cultures to plant a rosemary bush outside the new couple's threshold to instill memory of the love and commitment felt that special first day, until other 'superstitions' got in the way – like the saying "*where rosemary flourished, the woman rules.*" Silly men, scared of looking powerless next to their brides. (Don't they know behind every good man is a powerful woman?)

A study published in *Therapeutic Advances in Psychopharmacology* from Northumbria University in the United Kingdom noted that the particular chemical constituent 1,8-cineole – one of the main components of rosemary absorbed through inhalation – helped improve brain performance including memory. Studies showed the more 1,8-cineole in the blood, the higher level of accuracy and speed of recall. Dr. Mark Moss who participated in the study reports "*It is our view that the aroma therefore acts like a therapeutic drug, rather than any effects being a result of the more sensory properties of the aroma.*"

A different study published in the *International Journal of Neuroscience* in 2003 (also taking place at the University of Northumbria) showed the 'overall qualitative memory' was enhanced and performance was increased by those taking in rosemary.

So, whether you want to ward off age-related memory problems or just have help simply remembering your partner's birthday, rosemary is an excellent companion for anyone to add to their regime – and it smells good too.

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Sources:

[HerbCo Newsletter](#); [Botany.com](#); [New Discovery](#); [Huffington Post](#)