

DIET FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

This diet is one of keeping as well as possible in general, with specific reference to certain areas including nerves, muscles and digestion,

FOODS OR SUPPLEMENTS TO INCLUDE IN THE DIET

Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids (PUFA'S)

These are found in vegetable and nut oils such as sunflower, safflower, walnut, hemp and linseed oil. These must be taken raw and unprocessed. Refined oils are heated and this destroys their therapeutic properties. When buying, look for 'cold pressed' or 'unrefined' on the label. Organic oils are also preferable. When buying nuts and seeds it is also important to get as fresh as possible so buy from a shop that seems to have a high turnover of stock. Vacuum-sealed packs will stay fresh much longer. Foods containing PUFAs include: Sunflower seeds, Pecans, Walnuts, Almonds, Avocado, Peanuts.

Fish Oils and Evening Primrose Oil (EPO)

These are particularly good sources of the Essential Fatty Acids (EFA's). These can both be taken as supplements. Oily fish such as Mackerel, Herring, Salmon and Sardines can be included in the diet 3 times a week or more.

B Vitamins are best taken all together in a 'B complex'. They are also found in the following foods: brewers yeast, yeast extract e.g. Marmite, whole grains such as oatmeal and brown rice, green leafy vegetables, cantaloupe melon, pumpkin seeds and sesame seeds.

Anti oxidant vitamins: A, C, E and selenium

Minerals. The following minerals can be taken in various combinations depending on strength and variety of the products available to you. Magnesium especially should be taken alongside calcium in a ratio of at least 1/2 the amount of Magnesium to Calcium.

Zinc: A handful of Pumpkin seeds a day or supplement.

Magnesium: Figs, lemons, grapefruit, sweet corn, almonds and other nuts, seeds, dark green leafy vegetables and apples.

Calcium: Any supplement should have Magnesium included in a ratio of at least 2:1 e.g. 800mg Calcium: 400mg Magnesium

Lecithin to aid in fat breakdown

Grape Juice as an antioxidant

Beetroot is high in antioxidants and soft fibre

Bitters. Many herbs are bitters. These stimulate digestion aiding a sluggish bowel by increasing bile production and secretion of other digestive juices. Your herbalist may include them in your medicine if you have digestive symptoms. A gentle laxative may also be necessary

Digestive enzymes: dismutase, papaya and pineapple

Sometimes MS sufferers have a reduced amount of digestive enzymes. This can lead to reduced absorption of essential nutrients. There are various enzyme supplements on the market. Papaya or pineapple is a natural source of digestive enzymes so eating some before each meal is an alternative.

Probiotics can also help digestion by 'repopulating' the lower bowel with friendly bacteria. This friendly bacteria is necessary for digestion of some nutrients and medicines. Signs of poor digestion can include wind and bloating.

Protein for muscles. This is important when bearing in mind the dietary restrictions below. Try and increase intake of protein from other sources such as fish and nuts

There has been research to support the following dietary modifications

FOODS TO REDUCE OR EXCLUDE

Saturated fats

Meat

Dairy products

Gluten

Carbohydrates not high quantities (effects epa levels)

Sugar

Relapse can be triggered by emotional upset, physical injury, the contraceptive pill and viral infections. Of course these cannot all be avoided or planned for, but keeping well and boosting the immune system can prevent the viral infections, which may lead to an increase in symptoms. Emotional upsets can be supported by the use of nervous restoratives, which can be included in your prescription. Sometimes knowing what has lead to a relapse can help in itself.

For more information on MS contact

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