

Wahls diet

Dr. Terry Wahls developed the modified Paleolithic Wahls diet for managing MS in 2008. The Wahls diet is a version of the Paleolithic (Paleo) diet, which recommends you eat meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, healthy fats, and oils, and that you avoid processed foods, sugar, grains, most dairy products, legumes, artificial sweeteners, vegetable oils, margarine, and trans fats.

The modified Paleo Wahls diet makes the following recommendations beyond the Paleo diet:

- Eat nine or more cups of fruits and vegetables daily (three cups each of green leafy vegetables, sulphur-rich vegetables, and intensely coloured fruits or vegetables)
- Emphasize consumption of seaweed, algae, and nutritional yeast
- Consume limited servings of gluten-free grains and legumes
- Avoid eggs
- Consume lower meat and fish intake than the Paleo diet

Dr. Wahls developed The Wahls Elimination diet in 2015, which recommends avoiding all grains (including those that are gluten-free), legumes, and nightshades (including tomatoes, white potatoes, eggplant, peppers, and seed spices) to reduce lectin in the diet.

It is important to note that diets that exclude whole food groups (like grains and dairy in the Wahls Elimination diet) increase the probability of nutritional insufficiency. However, taking supplements when on these diets can help reduce the risk of nutritional deficiency.

OTHER DIET TIPS

In addition to the diet guidelines above, people with MS may want to consider the following food tips to help manage their symptoms.

- Make sure you eat enough food. Eating too few calories can cause fatigue.
- Prep your meals in advance. If you have time, batch-making meals can help you save energy later. If you're often fatigued, this can be especially helpful.
- Rearrange your kitchen. Place food, utensils, and other equipment in areas that are close by and easy for you to clean up. This will help you save energy.
- Try "ready-to-use" items. Buying pre-cut fruits and veggies can help you shave minutes off cooking time and make cooking simpler.
- Make thicker drinks. If you have difficulty swallowing, preparing thicker beverages like a nutrient-rich smoothie may be easier to manage.
- Soft foods may help. If chewing too much is making you fatigued, try choosing softer foods like baked fish, bananas, avocado, and cooked veggies.
- Limit crumbly foods. If you have difficulty swallowing or find yourself choking on food often, consider limiting foods that crumble, such as toast and crackers.
- Reach out for help. Even if you do not like asking for help, having members of your support network help with small tasks, like preparing meals, cleaning, or simply setting the table, can help ease your fatigue.

- Stay active. Although exercise can make a person with MS feel fatigued, it's especially important for helping achieve and manage optimal health and a moderate weight. It's also important for preventing osteoporosis, which is more common among people with MS.

If you have other MS-related concerns not addressed above, it's important to notify your healthcare team. They can offer personalized tips to help you manage your symptoms better.

SUMMARY

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune condition that affects the nervous system. There are no official dietary guidelines for MS. However, making certain dietary changes may help relieve common MS symptoms, such as constipation and fatigue, as well as improve overall quality of life. Dietary changes that may help include eating more grains, fish, and plant-based foods. In addition, avoiding low-nutrient foods may help with managing MS symptoms and potentially slow disease progression. It's recommended that people with MS avoid certain foods, including processed meats, refined carbs, junk foods, trans fats, and sugar-sweetened beverages.

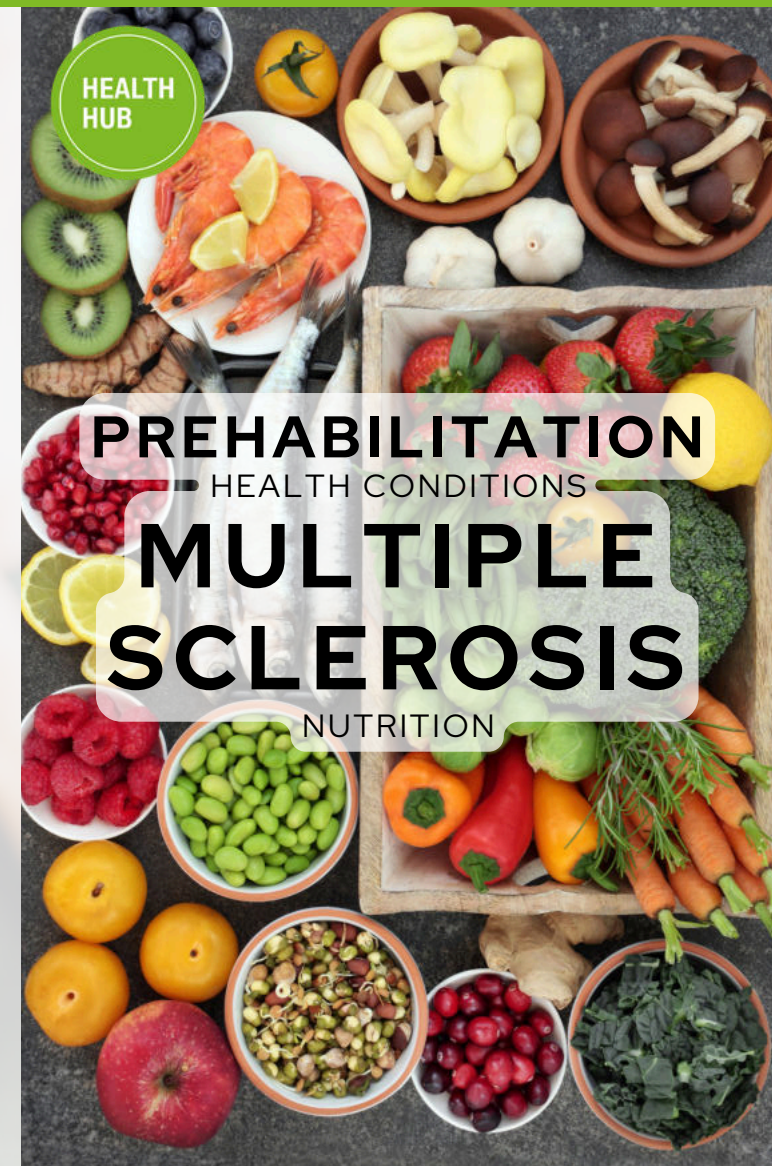
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Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disorder that gradually destroys the protective coverings that wrap around your nerve fibres. These coverings are called myelin sheaths. Over time, this disease can permanently damage your nerves, affecting communication between the brain and body. Symptoms of MS include:

- Fatigue / Tingling and numbness / Bladder and bowel dysfunction
- Movement difficulties and spasticity / Impaired vision
- Learning and memory difficulties

MS is highly complex, and the way the disease progresses varies from person to person. Although diet cannot cure MS, some research suggests that making dietary changes may help people with MS better manage their symptoms. This, in turn, may improve their quality of life.

HOW DOES DIET EFFECT MS

No two people with MS experience it the same way. However, scientists believe a combination of genetic and environmental factors may cause the disease, as well as that nutrition can have an influence. The fact that MS is more prevalent in Western countries than in developing nations is one clue that diet may play a key role. That is why dietary guidelines and recommendations for people with MS should aim to help manage symptoms to improve overall quality of life. Diet may help with MS in several ways, including:

- Preventing or controlling its progression
- Helping manage its symptoms
- Reducing flare-ups

Ideally, an MS-friendly diet should be:

- High in antioxidants to fight inflammation
- High in fibre to aid bowel movements
- Adequate in calcium and vitamin D to fight osteoporosis
- Pack plenty of vitamins and minerals to fight fatigue and promote wellness

It should also limit foods that have been linked to chronic inflammation and other poor health outcomes, or those that simply make day-to-day activities more difficult for someone with MS. Some evidence suggests that other dietary patterns, including ketogenic diets, may help improve symptoms in people with MS. However, this research is ongoing, and scientists need to further investigate the role of diet in MS.

A separate study found certain nutrients, including fish oil, B vitamins, N-acetylcysteine, and CoQ10, may benefit people with mild to moderate MS, potentially leading to better general functioning, as well as an improved quality of life and ability to move around. The nutrients associated with these positive changes included increased fat, cholesterol, folate, iron, and magnesium intakes. On the other hand, decreased carb intake appeared to be beneficial.

Clinical trials investigating the effects of intermittent fasting on MS are currently underway. There's also evidence that people with MS are more likely to be deficient in some nutrients, including vitamins A, B12, and D3. Preliminary evidence suggests that taking certain vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, antioxidants, plant compounds, and melatonin may help improve some symptoms.



MS – FOODS TO EAT

Based on current and ongoing research, an MS-friendly diet should help people with MS manage their symptoms. In particular, it should help manage disease progression and aim to minimize the effects that common MS symptoms have on overall quality of life.

Here is a list of foods to include on an MS-friendly diet:

- **Fruits and vegetables:** all fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Grains:** all grains, such as oats, rice, and quinoa.
- **Nuts and seeds:** all nuts and seeds.
- **Fish:** all fish, especially fresh fish and fatty oily fish, such as salmon and mackerel, as they're high in omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D.
- **Meats:** all fresh meats, such as beef, chicken, lamb, and more, especially beef liver which is particularly high in vitamin D and biotin.
- **Eggs:** good source of biotin, vitamin D, and other important nutrients.
- **Dairy products:** such as milk, cheese, yogurt, and butter.
- **Fats:** healthy fats, such as olive, flaxseed, coconut, and avocado oils.
- **Probiotic-rich foods:** such as yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, and kimchi.
- **Beverages:** water, herbal teas.
- **Herbs and spices:** all fresh herbs and spices.

In short, the guidelines for an MS-friendly diet are similar to an overall nutrient-rich, well-balanced diet. However, it emphasizes consuming more plant-based foods and grains. That is because plant-based foods and grains are higher in fibre, vitamins, minerals, and fluid, which can help with MS symptoms, such as constipation, fatigue, and bladder dysfunction. They're also higher in plant-based compounds that function as antioxidants, which are molecules that help defend your cells against free radical damage and inflammation. These compounds may help fight inflammation and potentially slow MS progression.

Fish, particularly fatty fish, such as salmon and mackerel, appear to be beneficial for MS, possibly because they're high in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids. They're also high in vitamin D, which can help keep your bones strong when combined with calcium. Current research on the effects of red meat and saturated fat intakes on MS symptoms shows mixed results. However, eating red meat in moderation, while focusing on more fruits, vegetables, and grains, is likely beneficial for people with MS.

Dairy products also show mixed results. In some studies, dairy products have been linked to disease activity. However, they're a good source of calcium, vitamin D, vitamin A, and potassium, so you can try including them in moderation on an MS-friendly diet. Talk with your doctor if you believe dairy products are making your MS symptoms worse.

In addition, some research shows that people with MS may have a higher risk of celiac disease, an autoimmune condition that causes damage to the small intestine in the presence of gluten. Gluten is a group of proteins in wheat, barley, and rye.

If you have MS and experience extreme discomfort when eating gluten-based products, such as bread, pasta, crackers, and baked goods, it's important to notify your healthcare team to see whether you have celiac disease. Other symptoms of celiac disease include bloating, diarrhoea, fatigue, abdominal pain, chronic headaches, and anaemia. People with MS who do not have celiac disease may still benefit from healthy grains in their diet.

FOODS TO AVOID

While an MS-friendly diet allows plenty of nutrient-dense, delicious options, there are still some food groups you should limit to help manage MS symptoms. Most of these foods are linked to chronic inflammation. They include processed meats, refined carbs, trans fats, and sugar-sweetened beverages, just to name a few. Here's a list of foods to avoid if you have MS:

- **Processed meats:** such as sausages, bacon, canned meats, and meats that are salted, smoked, or cured.
- **Refined carbs:** such as white bread, pasta, biscuits, and flour tortillas.
- **Fried foods:** such as fried chips, fried chicken and doughnuts.
- **Highly processed foods:** such as fast food, chips, and convenience and frozen meals.
- **Trans fats:** such as margarine and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- **Sugar-sweetened beverages:** such as energy and sports drinks, fizzy drinks and sweet tea.
- **Alcohol:** limit consumption of all alcoholic beverages as much as possible.

If you have celiac disease, aim to avoid all gluten-based foods, such as foods containing wheat, barley, and rye.

SPECIALTY DIETS

Several diets specifically aim to help slow progression and prevent flare-ups of MS. They include the Swank diet and variations of the Wahls diet. These diets are popular within the community of individuals with MS.

Swank diet

The Swank diet for MS is a low-fat, low-saturated fat eating pattern that neurologist Dr. Roy Swank, MD, PhD, developed in 1948. Its recommendations include:

- Avoid processed foods that contain saturated fat or hydrogenated oils.
- Limit saturated fat to 15 grams per day; consume no more than 20 to 50 grams per day of unsaturated fats.
- Avoid red meat for 1 year, then limit red meat to 3 ounces per week.
- Avoid dark meat poultry and limit fatty fish to 50 grams per day.
- Choose only dairy with 1% fat or less.
- Avoid egg yolks.
- Consume as many fruits and vegetables as you want.
- Enjoy whole grain breads, rice, and pastas.
- Snack on nuts and seeds daily.
- Consume 1 teaspoon of cod liver oil, and a multi-vitamin and mineral Supplement daily.

While Swank's studies had a long follow-up duration and large cohort size, they were not randomized controlled trials and were subject to several forms of bias. Larger, better-designed studies are needed to determine whether the Swank diet can help improve symptoms or delay progression of MS.