



Nutrition

JUDY BOONE

So one of the things that I've changed since I've been diagnosed with MS is, um, I don't eat as many sweets as I used to definitely. But I eat a lot of fresh veggies and fruits every day. And just try to eat a low fat diet, and just watch my sugar intake. And just drink a lot of water.

DAN MELFI

we've changed our diet in our house. Uh, so it's a little bit stronger in vegetables and we cut down the carbs and cut down, uh, a lot of the meat and, uh, I, I no longer drink and kind of, uh, Cokes or Pepsis or anything like that. Uh, it's usually sparkling water or water.

KELLEN PROUSE

We the biggest thing we did, uh, was cut out sugar. also eating as much, um, whole foods as possible. I'm not a vegetarian but I eat a lot less like red meat than I used to. Um, and try and eat lean proteins.

DR. PARDO

A lot questions come about, "What is the right diet for multiple sclerosis?" There is no specific diet for MS that has proven to provide any specific benefit. But obviously, having a healthy diet is going to prove, improve your health, and it's necessary to keep you feeling well.

KATHLEEN COSTELLO

Right now researchers are very actively pursuing what types of diets can be helpful or potentially harmful for people with MS and until then when someone hears about a diet, I recommend that they talk it over with their healthcare provider to make sure that it's safe and something that would be useful to try.

So often we default to saying, well, a heart healthy diet. So what we mean by that is a diet that's balanced, meaning it has adequate protein, carbohydrates, fats. Um, it's not high in one of those areas but it's balanced. We want a diet that's lower in concentrated sweets and sugars, high in fiber content, adequate fluid intake, adequate fresh fruits and vegetables, one that avoids processed foods.

DR. GIESSER

We do not have firm data that a gluten free diet will benefit people with MS, unless they happen to truly be gluten allergic. We do not have evidence that dairy products are deleterious for people with MS, unless they happen to have a true dairy, dairy allergy. People are starting to subject different dietary regimens to randomized controlled trials, just like you would study a drug or another treatment. So we're starting to get more information about diet. We know that obesity carrying fat tissue may promote inflammation.

KELLEN PROUSE

So if someone has mobility issues being overweight can just compound that problem and make it more difficult to get up out of the chair, to walk a distance, to move when there's compromised function or compromised lower extremity function, for instance. There have also been some studies looking at people who have MS and who are overweight and demonstrating that they have more inflammation and even more MRI activity.

DAN MELFI

Weight is always gonna be a challenge. It's very important to keep it controlled if you possibly can, um, and do the best you can.

JUDY BOONE

I think you could eat healthy no matter what. I think making good choices, but sometimes enjoying the things that you love because French fries is my number one favorite food. But I know that I can't have 'em every day. Being hydrated is very important. But, um, I just think that overall it just gives me more energy.

KATHLEEN COSTELLO

Having a diet with adequate fluid intake meaning water, non-caffeinated beverages, is very important to overall health and MS symptoms. Having a diet that's high in fiber is important for bowel function. When someone eats an unhealthy diet, one that's very high in sugars, for instance, they may experience an increase in fatigue level. Eating foods that have low nutritional value, a diet high in fast foods or what we consider to be junk foods, they also increase someone's fatigue level.

DR. BAR-OR

And while the information that we have now in the world of MS is insufficient, there are probably some very good other reasons to consider limiting salt intake and so probably by taking on a diet that has some limitation of salt that would be advocated by your heart doctor as well, you may well be doing a favor for your MS.

KATHLEEN COSTELLO

So for someone who's not getting adequate dietary sources of a particular nutrient, they may need to have a supplement.

JUDY BOONE

I take, um, a vitamin every day, and I also take Vitamin D, um, every day. Um, and I have been doing that, um, since around the time I was diagnosed with MS, MS. My Vitamin D was low and my doctor recommended that, because I'm not out in the sun, and don't get a lot of sun that I take Vitamin D every day

DR. BAR-OR

And vitamin D is a vitamin that we now appreciate plays some role in the context of MS at the very least in terms of the risk of developing MS and research that is coming out more recently increasingly is pointing to vitamin D being relevant also for people who have established MS and may be relevant to the degree of MS activity they have.

MARIE NAMEY

Vitamin D level is measured by the blood and many of us are low on the spectrum

of the normal range and so if individuals are low on a spectrum or lower than the normal levels should be, there is recommendation to supplement with oral vitamin D.

KAREN MELFI

When-when Dan and I decided together that we needed to eat healthier, we started shopping better. We-we go to more farmers markets, which is just a fun experience anyway. And we have a great time picking out healthy choices. It-it helps us both. We have been attending nutrition classes every week and it's a lot of fun. Um, we've learned, uh, what herbs and spices are healthy, what, uh, fats to use, what not to use. Right now we feel healthier. And we know we're doing the right thing for him.

JUDY BOONE

Um, changing my diet because of MS, um, has really helped my family a lot. Uh, just they enjoy eating healthy meals as well. And also, um, I just try to, um, tell my boys how important it is to eat healthy. And to just start young, and you know, just eat as healthy as possible, to live the best life that you can, and to feel better. And they enjoy, they enjoy the healthy meals and they always say, mom, is this healthy? So they're paying attention and I like that.