

# 12 NUTRITION TIPS FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS



Eating nutritious foods as part of a balanced diet and an attempt to beat symptoms of multiple sclerosis (MS) may be helpful in living with your condition. By making a few small changes to your diet, you may experience relief from fatigue, bowel and bladder difficulties, and changes in mood. Make sure to check with your doctor before you implement any changes. Here are some general tips for eating well and staying strong:

## SWITCH TO A HEALTHIER DIET

- 1 Take Small Steps:** Ease into making dietary changes. Make changes one at a time to help develop healthy eating habits.
- 2 Prioritize Fruits and Vegetables:** Eat fruits to curb sugar cravings, and make sure to have at least 3 servings of vegetables per day. Get creative with how you include them in meals!
- 3 Choose Antioxidant-Rich Foods:** Some research suggests you may limit damage to cells caused by free radicals by including certain vegetables (spinach, broccoli), certain fruits (berries, grapes), whole grains, beans, nuts, and dark chocolate in your diet.
- 4 Don't Forget Calcium-Rich Foods:** Calcium-rich foods can help keep your bones strong. Examples include low-fat cheese, yogurt, and milk, as well as sardines.
- 5 Avoid Unhealthy Fats:** Limit your intake of butter, red meat, and palm oil. Instead, choose healthy fat sources such as nuts, olive oil, avocado, and fatty fish.

## TAKE CARE WITH MEALS AND MEDS

- 6 Don't Eat Too Quickly!** Eat slowly with your chin down to prevent choking and help you recognize when you're full. Eating small quantities can also help you avoid overeating.
- 7 Try Snacks With Your Meds:** Unless your doctor gives you other instructions, eat a healthy carbohydrate snack (whole grain bread or crackers) with your medication to prevent nausea. Avoid overly acidic fruit like grapefruit when taking your medication to prevent upset stomach and food-drug interaction.
- 8 Be Careful With Supplements:** Nutritional supplements and vitamins can affect compromised digestive tracts. Taking too many can stimulate cells that can damage nerve endings. Ask your doctor about any supplements before taking them.

## EAT TO BEAT COMMON SYMPTOMS

- 9 Fatigue:** Consuming low-glycemic index (GI) foods will result in a more sustained, slow release of energy, which can help prevent fatigue.
- 10 Constipation:** Drink water regularly, and eat fiber-rich foods (fruit, beans, bran) to help avoid constipation.
- 11 Dehydration, Infection, and Headaches:** Make sure you're drinking 8 to 10 glasses of water per day. Avoid beverages that act as diuretics like coffee unless your doctor says it's okay.
- 12 Increased Inflammation:** Reduce your intake of salt, red meat, fried foods, sugary drinks, and low-fiber foods.

**Sources:** [hopkinsmedicine.org](http://hopkinsmedicine.org); [msif.org](http://msif.org); [mstrust.org](http://mstrust.org); [nationalmssociety.org](http://nationalmssociety.org); [nchpad.org](http://nchpad.org); [NIH.gov](http://NIH.gov)

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