

Best Bet Diet

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disorder where the immune system attacks the fatty covering called myelin, which insulates the nerves in the Central Nervous System (CNS).

What triggers the immune system to behave this way is not clear but one of the leading authors on the topic, Ashton Embry, argues that diet, in conjunction with low levels of vitamin D, is the main cause of the condition in genetically susceptible individuals.

Proposed Development of MS

The autoimmunity process is ignited by intact (undigested) food proteins escaping through the gut walls, a process known as 'leaky gut syndrome', and into the circulatory system where the immune system response is to attack the invaders.

The molecular structure of parts of the proteins in certain foods is so similar to parts of the proteins in myelin that the immune system cannot differentiate between invaders and self (known as molecular mimicry) and ends up also attacking the myelin, in the cells in the CNS.

For this attack to take place, however, it must do so across a compromised blood-brain barrier that, under normal circumstances, would have prevented this attack from taking place.

So, it would appear that the individual with MS is someone whose food is not properly digested, possibly due to low stomach acid content, and who, as a result, may have had a history of stomach problems prior to the diagnosis of MS.

The gut wall, which in parts is only one cell thick, has become porous and is allowing these undigested food proteins to leak into the blood system where the immune system automatically identifies these as invaders and creates antibodies to attack them. The individual is also someone whose blood-brain barrier has been compromised, for whatever reason, therefore, the CNS cell myelin is open to attack.

Dietary Support

To help combat these problems, Ashton Embry has developed the Best Bet Diet. The diet is focused on avoiding or restricting the consumption of foods whose molecular structure is very similar to the myelin in our own bodies. This helps reduce the chance of igniting the autoimmunity process and causing an attack on the CNS myelin.

The "Suspect" Foods

Dairy - Avoid all animal milks, and all butters, cheeses, and yoghurts made from them, and all products that contain them. Where appropriate, replace in the diet with rice milk or coconut milk.

Gluten - Avoid all wheat, rye and barley, and all products containing them. It is advised that oats are also avoided despite them not containing gluten. For our purposes, they are still regarded as a "modern" grain, added to the diet only in recent times, and the chances of avoiding autoimmune reactions is greater without them. These "suspect" grains are replaced in the diet with rice, corn, quinoa and a whole range of other grains/flours that are both gluten-free and widely available.

Beans and pulses - Avoid all beans, peas and pulses, especially soy, and all products containing them. All other vegetables are allowed, in particular the green leafy ones, like spinach and broccoli that are high in omega 3 fatty acids. Refined sugar is also avoided, wherever possible, because it can make the leaky gut worse and can also adversely affect the immune system. More acceptable alternative sweeteners are raw honey, maple syrup, fruit sugar(fructose) and stevia.

Eggs and Yeast - are both allowed in limited quantities if the individual shows no specific allergic reaction to them.

For further reading visit Ashton Embry website:
<https://www.direct-ms.org/>