

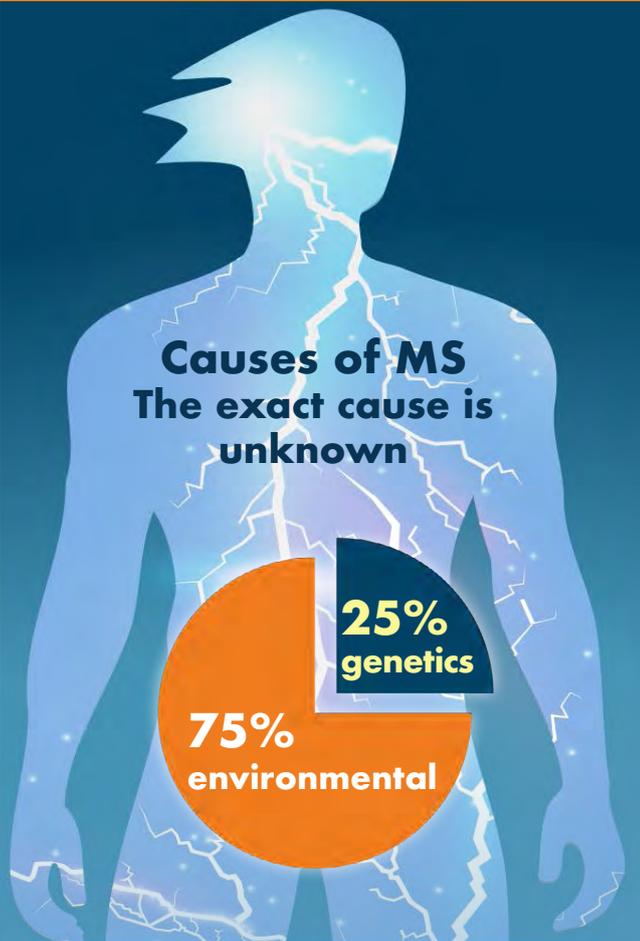
Multiple sclerosis

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PLANT-BASED
Health Professionals UK

Promoting Sustainable Health and Nutrition



Disease progression is largely determined by modifiable lifestyle factors, particularly if changes are made early on.

Women are **3 times** more likely to be diagnosed with MS but men tend to have more rapid progression.



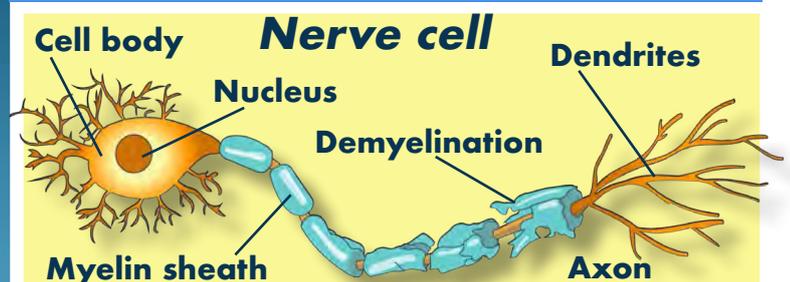
MS is categorised into four groups:

- clinically isolated syndrome (just an odd episode)
- relapsing-remitting (RRMS)
- primary progressive
- secondary progressive

RRMS is the most common form although it is now thought that all groups are part of the same disease state, just different stages.

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an inflammatory condition that causes **demyelination** of the brain and spinal cord, resulting in progressive disability.

Currently there is **no cure** but there are some disease modifying therapies that can slow progression in some people.



It is the most common degenerative neurological condition in younger people, and numbers are increasing each year. Currently over **110,000** people in the UK have MS, **2.5million** world wide.

Environmental risk factors:

- Smoking
- Lack of sunlight/vitamin D
- Diet high in saturated fat and processed foods (leading to nutrient deficiency)
- Diet low in omega 3 fatty acids
- Lack of exercise
- High stress levels
- Viruses particular EBV

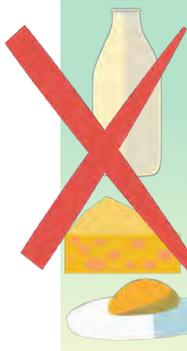
MS can affect all parts of the body. The most common symptoms are:

- Extreme fatigue and brain fog
- Eyesight issues like optic neuritis, double vision
- Tingling, pain or strange sensations
- Memory and cognitive issues
- Difficulty in walking
- Bowel and bladder issues

Research suggests that people with MS who follow a diet low in saturated fat have better outcomes (Swank).

Eating more whole plant foods with more fibre and micronutrients has also been shown to improve quality of life and lead to less fatigue (HOLISM study, Coe et al 2021).

Avoid the following foods:



Eliminate
Meat, dairy and eggs (there is some evidence in the HOLISM study that fish is beneficial because of its omega 3 content)

No
Fried or deep fried food



No
Fast food or ultra-processed food including baked goods and pastries (particularly those with palm and/or coconut oil)



Avoid
Coconut – fresh, dried or oil – chocolate (cocoa butter) and peanuts



Have more of these:



Fruit and vegetables include variety and lots of colours for their anti-inflammatory effects

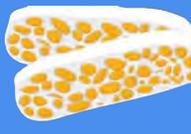
Wholegrains
wholewheat, rice, barley, oats, quinoa etc



Nuts and seeds particularly flaxseed, chia seeds and walnuts



Tofu and tempeh



Beans and legumes



Plant-based milks and yoghurts (not coconut)



Additional lifestyle factors:



Stop smoking

Exercise every day – mix of cardio and strength training according to ability (build up).



Supplement with vitamin D



Take medication if appropriate (research shows best outcomes with mixture of disease modifying treatment and lifestyle changes (STOP MS, HOLISM)).





Maintain a healthy weight

Reduce stress with mindfulness and/or meditation. Seek counselling if needed.



Rest as needed, sleep well.



References

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