

# **Diet and Exercise for MS:**

What is Hype? What is Right?  
What You Need to Know

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# Presenters



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# Learning Objectives:

Participants and Support Partners will:

- Strengthen abilities to distinguish between “what’s hype” and “what’s known” related to diet, exercise, and multiple sclerosis
- Lay groundwork to understand how diet and exercise may influence MS symptoms and overall health
- Considering current evidence-based recommendations & developing questions to ask to your team

# Dr. Google Can Be Confusing...

- Science
  - Seek out “.gov” and “.org” websites
  - Explore peer-reviewed information
  - Use your healthcare team as a guide
- Pseudoscience
  - Beware of “cures”
  - Watch out for “all” and “absolute” words/phrases
  - Be cautious of testimonials

**What's the Hype:**  
**There is an ideal diet for MS**



# What's Known

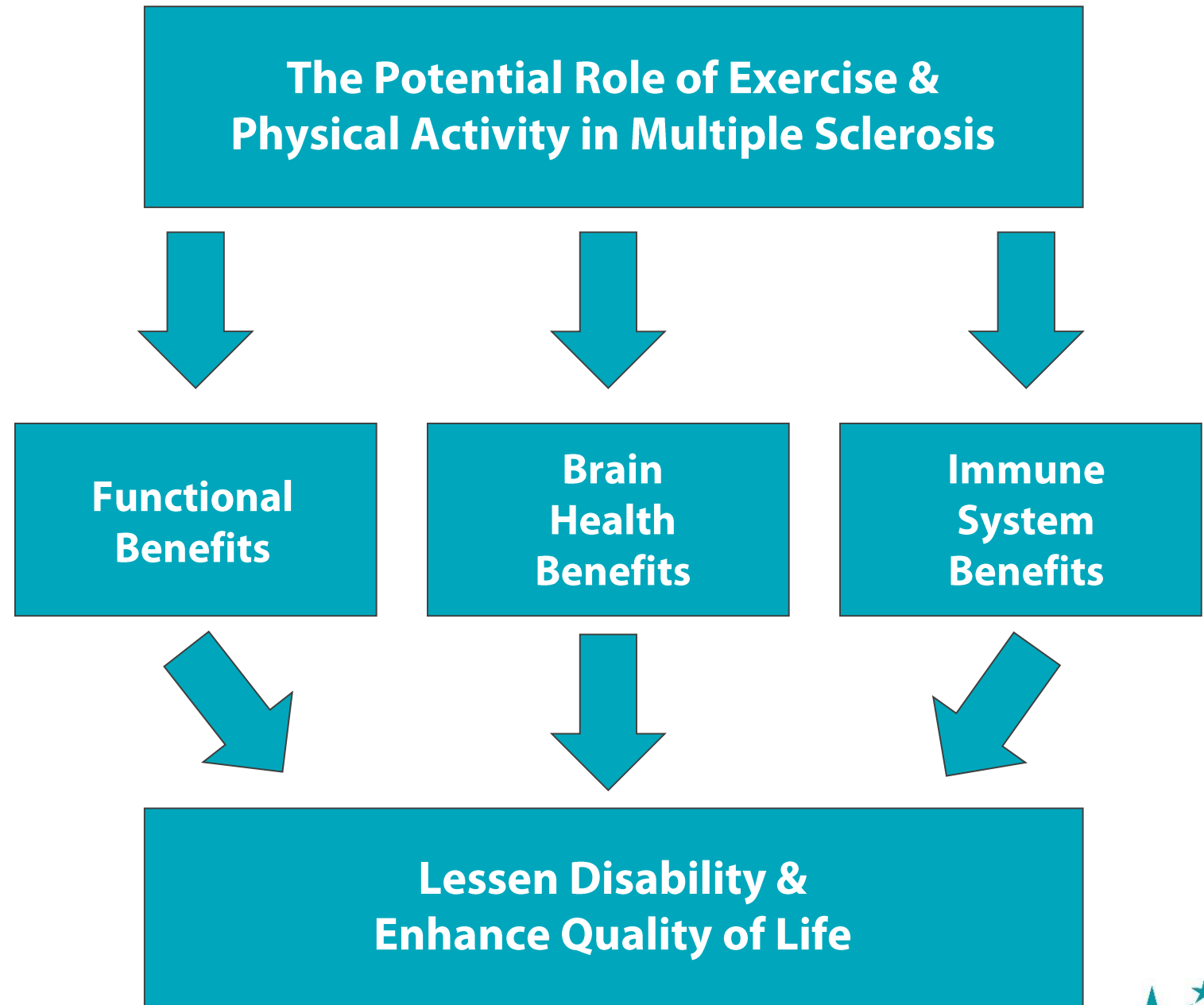
- Many diets promoted to benefit people with MS but at this point, **NO DIET has been proven to alter the course of Multiple Sclerosis.**
- **Do you have a comorbid health condition?**
- Speak with your healthcare team prior to beginning dietary interventions.
- What changes are you considering and why?
- What are your expectations? Are they realistic?
- Can it become your forever “diet”?

**What's the Hype:**

**"If I exercise *right*, I can  
stop my MS"**



## What's Known:





# Exercise and Physical Activity as a “Disease Modifying Treatment”

- Exercise and physical activity have been linked to reduced:
  - Relapse frequency
  - Mobility disability
  - Mobility progression
  - Lesion volume
- Exercise and physical activity can influence co-morbid health conditions that may worsen symptoms and hasten disease progression

**What's the Hype:**  
**Having MS means you have**  
**a “leaky gut”**



# What's Known

- **“Leaky gut”** is not a clinically recognized diagnosis
- While the gut (microbiome) is an exciting area of research, it is in the early stages.
- **Research is underway but not yet conclusive**
- **What We Know:**
  - Research suggests that the microbial contents of the gut (Microbiome) :
    - Can be altered by the diet
    - May affect the immune system
    - people with MS may be different than non-MS population
- **What we DON'T Know (yet)**
  - What makes a favorable and unfavorable microbiome?
  - What is the best approach to alter the microbiome?
- In other words, the news is exciting and promising BUT, there is still a lot more to learn.

## **What's the Hype:**

**"I have to do the same  
exercise, so I don't lose  
progress"**



# What's Known

- ALL movement counts!
  - Physical Activity versus Exercise
    - Physical Activity: ALL movement
    - Exercise: Flexibility, resistance training, balance training, aerobic exercise
- Exercise performance can fluctuate
  - Variety of exercise options can be helpful
- Schedule intermittent exercise throughout the day
- Prioritize exercise
- Have options and consider adaptations



# Movement Prescription:

**150 minutes** of moderate intensity  
exercise/physical activity per week

# Evidence-Based Exercise Ideas:

- **Flexibility:**
  - Daily
  - 2–3 sets of each stretch, hold 30–60sec/stretch
  - Modes: yoga, targeted stretching exercises
- **Resistance Training:**
  - 2–3x/week
  - 1–3 sets for each exercise, 8–15 repetitions/set, 5–10 exercises
  - Modes: weight machines, free weights, resistance bands, body weight
- **Balance/Coordination:**
  - 3–6x/week
  - 20–60 minutes
  - Interventions individualized for intensity/duration – fall prevention goal!
  - Modes: Pilates, dance, Tai Chi, postural stability, vestibular exercises

# Evidence-Based Exercise Ideas

- **Aerobic:**

- 2–3x/week
- 10–30minutes
- Moderate exercise intensity (40%–60% of maximum HR) OR 11–13 RPE (on a 20-point RPE)
- Modes: Arm bike, cycling, treadmill or overground walking, rowing, swimming

- **Advanced Aerobic:**

- 5x/week
- Up to 40 minutes
- 70%-80% of maximum HR
- Approaching 15 RPE (on a 20-point RPE)

- **HIIT:**

- 1x/week
- 5, 30-90 second intervals
- 90%-100% maximum HR with equivalent rest
- Stair stepper



# **What's the Hype:**

## **Food is medicine**



**“Let Food Be Thy Medicine, and Let  
Medicine Be They Food.”**

Hippocrates  
c. 460 – c. 370 BC

# The History of Food as Medicine

AD 1000 that  
root is  
heathen.  
Here, say this  
**prayer.**

AD 1940  
That potion is  
snake oil.  
Here, swallow  
this **pill.**

AD 2000  
That antibiotic  
doesn't work.  
Here, **eat this**  
**root.**

2020 BC here,  
eat this **root.**

AD 1850  
That prayer is  
superstition.  
Here, drink this  
**potion.**

AD 1985  
That pill is  
ineffective.  
Here, take this  
**antibiotic.**

# What's Known

- **Medicine has advanced since the days of Hippocrates.** And while environmental factors, diet, and living habits are all important contributors to our overall health, they do not take the place of medicine. And will not cure cancer. Or Multiple Sclerosis.
- “All Natural” supplements and herbal remedies are treated as medicine by our bodies.
  - Liver
  - Interactions
  - Not regulated
- **Get your nutrients from food**

# Avoiding Hype Doesn't mean Avoiding Hope

- Continue to:
  - Be curious
  - Seek out the most accurate, up-to-date information and resources that will help you live your best life with MS
  - Find those health care providers, people, and organizations that support your efforts for a healthy life!
- Diet and exercise strategies are unique to each person – just like your MS

**“Find a place for the illness, but  
keep the illness in its place.”**

Gonzalez, Steinglass, & Reiss



# PROGRAMS

**CAN DO®**

FOUR DAY

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**Webinar & Telearning Series**

MONTHLY

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**TAKE CHARGE®**

TWO DAY

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**Library Articles**

READ & LISTEN

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**JUMPSTART®**

ONE DAY

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**Ask the Can Do Team**

Q&A

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[CanDo-MS.org/programs](http://CanDo-MS.org/programs)

