MS and Weight Loss

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Managing Weight Gain

It is very common for a person with MS to gain weight because of the lack of activity in their life. For a number of reasons, MS makes it hard for a person to be active like they want to be.

Fatigue is a factor that many MS patients deal with, as well as depression, pain and steroid therapy. However, when you are not physically active, you tend to gain weight.

Unfortunately, becoming overweight only adds to the problems you face with MS. In addition to feeling even more fatigued, you may have the following problems:

- Stress on joints
- Negative self-image
- Bed sores
- Extra demand on heart and lungs
- Risk of other illnesses

Excess weight can make MS symptoms worse than before, so it is imperative to address this issue early on so that you are not plagued with excess weight. There are many ways to keep your weight gain from spiraling out of control, including keeping your diet and exercise balanced.

Eat Better

If you are inactive due to flare-ups or fatigue, you should not be eating as many calories. This does not mean you have to cut back on eating. You will just need to eat better.

- Instead of soda pop, drink water or tea without sweeteners.
- Fruit and vegetables should be eaten in place of refined carbohydrates like white bread, sugar, and starchy foods.
- Opt for lean choices of meat and forego the bacon and sausage.

You do not have to starve to keep your weight down. By simply eating lower caloric foods you can move close to your weight goal. Additionally, these foods will offer more nutrition and help with your MS symptoms like fatigue.

Light Activity

MS and exercise can go together, despite how you may feel. Even a little activity is better than none. You can go for a walk around the block or even in your house. Exercise as much as you can without overdoing it; you don’t have to run a marathon to benefit from exercise.

Treat Depression

Depression can cause people to eat more than they should. If you think you are eating because of depression, you should talk to your general practitioner about it. Medication may be offered to help this condition.

Losing Too Much Weight

Another issue that may happen if you have MS is losing too much weight. Losing too much weight where you become underweight is detrimental to your health. You should make an appointment with your doctor if you are underweight. A change of medication may be needed or a different approach in the treatment of your MS. Your doctor may refer you to a nutritionist to help you find healthy ways to gain weight.

If you are experiencing weight loss due to muscle wasting, a physical therapist will be recommended to help you. Muscle wasting can occur in more serious cases and can lead to limited mobility. He/she will prescribe the exercises needed to build your muscle mass again.