

Diets high in vegetables and fish may lower risk of multiple sclerosis

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People who consume a diet high in vegetables and fish may have a reduced risk of multiple sclerosis, new research led by Curtin University has found.

The research, published in the *Multiple Sclerosis Journal*, found an association between a higher intake of healthy foods, such as vegetables, [fish](#), eggs, poultry and legumes, and a lower risk of [multiple sclerosis](#) (MS).

Lead author Dr. Lucinda Black, from the School of Public Health at Curtin University, said the study investigated the links between dietary patterns and the risk of a first clinical diagnosis of central nervous system demyelination, a common precursor to MS.

"There are a number of known [environmental risk factors](#) for MS, including low vitamin D status and low sun exposure, smoking, and a history of glandular fever, and we were intrigued to see whether diet and [food](#) intake also played a significant role in this," Dr. Black said.

"We reviewed dietary intake data from the Ausimmune Study, a multicentre, case-control study conducted across Australia in Brisbane, Newcastle, Geelong, the western districts of Victoria, and Tasmania, and then assessed whether a healthy diet or a western-style diet had an impact on the chances of having a demyelinating event, which involves damage to the myelin sheath that protects the nerves.

"We found that a higher intake of healthy foods, such as [vegetables](#) and fish, was associated with a lower risk of MS, with around a 50 per cent reduced risk in those who had the highest intake of healthy foods, compared to those with a much lower intake. This finding is especially relevant to those who currently consume low amounts of these foods."

Dr. Black explained that while there is no known cure for MS, the research could have potential implications for improving people's diets to help reduce the risk of MS in those who are at high risk.

"As MS is a condition that currently cannot be cured, it is important to

provide accurate advice to people who are at a higher risk of getting the condition, as this could help to improve their lifestyle and diet," Dr. Black said.

"We found that there is a strong need to improve nutrition education currently available for people at high risk of MS onset, as this may be beneficial in helping them follow a [healthy diet](#) and potentially reducing their risk of MS."

The paper was also co-authored by researchers from the School of Public Health at Curtin University, The University of Melbourne and The Australian National University in Canberra.

More information: Lucinda J Black et al. A healthy dietary pattern associates with a lower risk of a first clinical diagnosis of central nervous system demyelination, *Multiple Sclerosis Journal* (2018). [DOI: 10.1177/1352458518793524](#)

Provided by Curtin University

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