**Overcoming Multiple Sclerosis Handbook Webinar – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s)**

**Intravenous vitamin C**

I am not aware of any direct evidence for the benefits of IV vitamin C in MS. Of course, vitamin C deficiency can cause very serious problems, and can also contribute to worsening MS, but if you are eating a plant-based wholefood diet, this will almost certainly not be an issue. There is no additional benefit from super-supplementing with vitamins, and in fact there is evidence of increase all-cause mortality in those taking multi-vitamin supplements. It is probably best to stick to natural sources.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5537779/>

**Energy drinks and fatigue**

I would strongly advise against energy drinks for fatigue management. They contain many artificial agents, and at best may give some temporary relief followed by a sudden crash of energy and worsening of symptoms. Coffee is a natural way of getting caffeine and has the benefit of additional antioxidants. There is some evidence that it can be useful in fatigue management.

A far better tool for management of fatigue is an appropriately designed exercise program with a regular mindfulness practice – discussed further in the webinar by George and Phil.

If you are experiencing MS fatigue we have some tips on how you can manage it and feel better [here.](https://overcomingms.org/about-multiple-sclerosis/ms-symptoms/ms-fatigue)

**Worsening symptoms with unchanged MRI**

This is very common so soon after diagnosis, and if the MRI is unchanged likely reflects the fact that the central nervous system is repairing and “rewiring” from the initial damage it sustained. We know that the OMS program can take around 3-5 years to have its full effects, and that the symptoms of any individual relapse can last for up to a year, the analogy of “turning around an oil tanker” is often used. Patience and kindness to yourself are absolutely key in your recovery.

Of course, if your symptoms continue to worsen over time, it is important for your MS team to continue to monitor and scan, in case a change of treatment is required to try and establish better control of the disease.

**Intermittent fasting/ Propionate/ Microbiome**

The whole area of the microbiome, gut health and fasting is rapidly expanding, and holds promise in many areas of human health, including MS. Research is currently in the early stages of human trials, so there is no definitive guidance, but OMS will of course keep you updated as it is released. In the meantime, there is more information on our website:

<https://overcomingms.org/latest/ms-and-gut-maybe-its-time-get-specific>

**Algae oil**

Algae Oil is actually the primary source of omega-3 fatty acids in fish. The 2 main types here are DHA and EPA, and in flax oil it is ALA. In the bosy, ALA is converted into DHA and EPA, and the efficiency of this conversion varies from person to person but can be as low as 10%.   
We recommend [flax oil](https://overcomingms.org/recovery-program/diet/role-fats-ms/omega3-supplements) for the simple reason that the HOLISM study shows clear evidence of benefit in MS, but we recognise that some people find it very difficult to tolerate the 20-40mls daily that is advised. Whilst we recommend gradually increasing the dose and mixing it with smoothies or food in these people, some will simply not be able to take it, suffering from gastrointestinal issues. In this case it is reasonable to find an alternative source of omega-3, and algae oil is a good one. You should however calculate an approximate conversion from flax oil algae, remembering that flax is 50% omega-3, and therefore even if we assume a 10% of active omega-3, this may still be quite a large daily dose to achieve the same concentrations in algae oil. There is also no direct evidence of benefit in algae oil, but if you were to have your omega 6:3 ratio blood test performed and achieved a ratio of 2:1 or 3:1, then I think it is safe to assume that it is protective.

**CBD oil**

We support any MS intervention that is evidence based, and the evidence base is large and congruent on the subject of medical cannabis. It is estimated that 10% of people with MS could benefit from the use of medical cannabis products whether that be for pain and spasticity relief or to help with anxiety issues or sleep disturbance.

One commonly used form is CBD oil, which is available in many health-food stores and is perfectly legal. This avoids the narcotic side-effects from smoking cannabis, and many find it very useful in managing their symptoms. It has to be privately funded by the patient though, as it cannot be prescribed by the medical profession. As it is not a medicine, it is not subject to the same regulations in preparation and quality, so you must do a bit of research to find a suitable and effective form.  
  
You can read our article here: [www.overcomingms.org/latest/problems-cannabis](http://www.overcomingms.org/latest/problems-cannabis)

**Cold Therapy/ Wim Hof**

There isn’t anything in the literature specifically around cold water and MS, but it is a very interesting topic though. The emerging evidence behind cold water immersion and vagal nerve activation, with the resulting mental health benefits is fascinating. The anecdotal stories of reduced pain and spasticity and improved mobility with MS are definitely worthy of further investigation. Given that a key tenet of the OMS program is vagal nerve activation through meditation, I think it is completely reasonable to give it a try. Cryotherapy and its effects on the immune system are also very interesting and I understand are in the early stages of research.

Please make sure it is done in a safe way though, and if you’re planning on open water swimming definitely purchase a buoy to strap to your waist. One thing to be mindful of with MS is your body’s response to such extreme stresses, so build up your tolerance slowly and be ready to stop if it is not right for you. Many people start with a 5 second cold shower and gradually increase this over time.

**Lesions without symptoms**

This is not uncommon, as we know that symptoms are only the type of the “MS iceberg”, and that on average there will be 10 lesions for every relapse. It emphasises the importance of continued focus on a healthy lifestyle even if you feel well once diagnosed with MS.

**Ozone**

This is in the early stages of research, and at this stage shows benefits in terms of anti-inflammatory immune system functioning, but I am not aware of any reported patient benefits yet. It is certainly very interesting and may well prove useful –hyperbaric oxygen therapy has been used for many years as a tool to improve fatigue.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33724614/>

**Pons device**

This has recently received FDA approval for the treatment of some motor and cognitive issues in MS, and several small studies demonstrate benefit. As it is applying electrical stimulation to the tongue, it needs to be used very carefully and should only be done so under the care of a healthcare professional.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-authorizes-marketing-device-improve-gait-multiple-sclerosis-patients>

**Other autoimmune conditions**

It would be wonderful, and would almost certainly be hugely beneficial in many conditions other than MS. We are a small organisation, and our focus has to be on serving our own community and ensuring that more healthcare professionals spread the message of lifestyle intervention to their patients.

**For more specific questions please direct your questions to** [**contact@overcomingms.org**](mailto:contact@overcomingms.org)