

FINDING HOPE WITH OMS

Webinar series

OMS Diet: A Practical Guide

Wednesday 17th November at 11am GMT



1. If I'm only allowed 12gms of fat per day, how much flaxseed oil can I consume?

When we are talking about limiting fat in the OMS diet recommendations we mean saturated fat, which is generally recognised as being bad for our health. But saturated fat also causes degeneration, which is one of the things we are concerned about in relation to the development and progression of MS. So that's why it's recommended that saturated fat should be avoided as far as possible.

Flaxseed oil, while it does have some saturated fat in it, its only about 9%. The recommended daily amount is 20 - 40 ml, which means that you are really only going to getting about 2 - 4 g of saturated fat from that.

So providing that you are avoiding saturated fat as far as possible in the rest of your diet you are going to be pretty safe taking your daily dose of flaxseed oil.

2. Can someone please explain to me the difference between whole wheat and whole grain. I've seen a lot of whole wheat pasta but not often whole grain.

Think of whole grain as an umbrella term for all grains that are whole. Whole wheat is a type of whole grain. So, if a bread is whole grain might contain several different whole grains like whole barley grain or whole brown rice. Whole wheat is a type of whole grain. This is a great summary: <https://overcomingms.org/recovery-program/diet/why-wholegrain-best-choice>

3. Are 'roasted' nuts and roasted nut butter allowed?

It's best to avoid roasted nuts and nut butters if possible. Most roasted nuts are also roasted in oil and the heat damages the fragile fats. Purchase only raw, unroasted, no-salt-added nuts and use raw nut butters if possible.

4. How can I follow the OMS if I also have a gluten free diet? It is sometime hard to find alternatives if you eat out of your house. Thank you!

Yes you can follow the OMS diet while still being gluten-free. There are a few things to keep in mind. Swap whole wheat pasta for brown rice, quinoa, or legume pasta. Be sure to purchase certified glute-free oats if you can tolerate oats – some people with gluten intolerance cannot tolerate oats at all. In that case make porridge with millet or quinoa flakes or buckwheat (gluten-free despite "wheat" in the name).

Also swap soy sauce for gluten-free tamari and be sure to check any sauces for gluten in the ingredients. Look for gluten-free and plant-based recipes – there are many resources now. And remember to keep meals simple.

5. What are your tips for eating out and avoiding food cooked in oils?

Eating out can certainly be a bit tricky, especially when you do not know exactly how a dish has been prepared and every ingredient that has been used. A useful place to start are the Chef Cards that are available to download on the OMS website, which clearly explain what you can and can't eat, and are available in several languages <https://overcomingms.org/resources/free-downloads>.

Giving or emailing one of these to a restaurant can really help them make sure they have something you can eat. From a personal perspective, if I can, I will always have a look at the menu online beforehand, and if possible, give the restaurant a call as they are usually very helpful in adapting a dish so that can eat it. If it's more of a last-minute situation, then a marinara pizza, with a tomato sauce and no mozzarella is usually safe, and I always ask for salads with no dressing, just extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar on the side, so that I can dress it myself. You could even take a little of your own flaxseed oil with you.

Apart from Italian, I can usually find things I can eat in Japanese (think sushi and noodle soups) and Middle Eastern restaurants. Another favourite of mine is steamed fish in a Thai restaurant. Try The Happy Cow app for finding vegan restaurants in your area.

6. Can you recommend which Vitamix would be best to buy?

I am a big fan of the classic 5200 Vitamix series but many people also enjoy the Ascent line. You can also purchase refurbished Vitamix models at a cheaper price point and they often come with a warranty as well. Be sure the model you buy comes with a plunger (this is helpful for making Nice Cream, smoothies, and thick sauces).

7. I'd like to ask about living alone, no family, managing a budget for the diet when most things are bulk based and it can mean a lot of waste which is bad for budget and environment - any tips or advice, thanks

I understand how you feel about it being not so easy for someone living alone. I have personal experience of this, as my partner often works away for weeks at a time, and I am left feeding only myself! So, I do a lot of cooking full recipes (to feed 4) and then either eating some the next day for lunch or dinner or freezing the leftovers in individual portions.

If you aren't used to doing this, it can seem like a lot of work upfront, but it's cheaper and saves you a lot of time in the long run. I love to do this with vegetable soups in the winter which are cheap to make, and it means I always have something hot available for lunch.

You can still take advantage of buying items with a long shelf life in bulk or when there is a special offer (rice, pasta, tinned goods). Potatoes, onions and garlic will keep for a couple of weeks in a dark, dry and cool space, and it's a good idea to buy bread and freeze it in slices. Frozen fish vegetables and fruit can be useful to have in the freezer so that you can just take the amount you need and are often cheaper than fresh.

8. Do you have any views on intermittent fasting on the OMS program?

Whilst this is not an area of expertise for either of us, there is an interesting podcast on the subject with Dr Valter Longo, the scientist behind the Fasting Mimicking Diet, which you can find here: <https://overcomingms.org/resource/podcast/s2-episode-15>

9. Some supermarket products contain traces of peanuts, eggs, etc. Are these products safe to use?

Product labelling can be vague and confusing. "May contain" simply means that whilst a product is not supposed to contain the named ingredient, the manufacturer can't be sure it doesn't. They can't be sure there hasn't been cross-contamination during preparation, so they put this warning message on there to try to protect themselves in case someone has an allergic reaction to one of their products.

If you have an allergy to any of the named ingredients in the warning, you should avoid using the product. Otherwise, if you can't find an alternative product that does not have the warning message, you should be OK to use it.

10. How do you define moderate? For example, tahini is OK to use on OMS, but what is the moderate measure?

If you [download the presentation slides](#), you will find recommended servings for nuts, olives and avocado. Tahini like nut butters, is high in fat. 100g of tahini has 55-60 g of fat content of which 6-10 g is saturated fat. It is therefore also high in calories. But it also has a lot of other valuable nutrients which are beneficial to the body, and which can be absorbed more easily than from whole sesame seeds.

Like nut butters, you can use tahini to spread thinly on toast or crackers, as an ingredient in hummous, or in recipes to replace other types of fat. I would suggest that one tablespoon would be a moderate serving.