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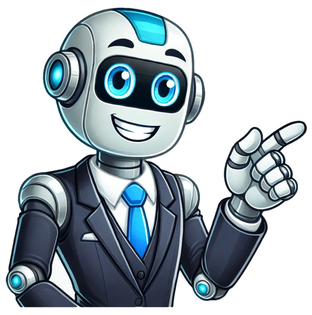

It’s an exciting day on the blog because today, I’m thrilled to share insights on a topic that’s close to many hearts in the MS community – the Wahls Protocol. If you’re navigating the world of multiple sclerosis (MS) or other autoimmune conditions, you’ve likely come across Dr. Terry Wahls and her groundbreaking approach to managing conditions through diet and lifestyle changes. As someone who's both a practitioner and a patient, Dr. Wahls’ journey from a tilt-recline wheelchair to biking and working every day is nothing short of inspiring. Dr. Wahls' Journey and The Birth of The Wahls Protocol Dr. Terry Wahls' story begins with her own battle with secondary progressive MS, which confined her to a tilt-recline wheelchair for four years. Despite following conventional treatments, her condition worsened. Dr. Wahls embarked on a personal mission to improve her health. She dove into research, focusing on the nutrients her body needed to thrive. This exploration led to the development of the Wahls Protocol, a nutrition-based program that Dr. Wahls credits for her remarkable turnaround. "I slowly improved my function, strength, and endurance through exercise and physical therapy as well as following my nutrition protocol," Dr. Wahls shared with us. Her dedication not only allowed her to walk again but also to enjoy biking, a passion she once thought she'd lost forever. What is the Wahls' Protocol? The Wahls Protocol is more than a diet; it's a holistic approach to health emphasizing the power of nutrition to heal the body. Dr. Wahls explains, "It’s about understanding the environmental factors we can control and optimize to create health or let dwindle into disease." This approach includes dietary choices, stress reduction techniques, exercise, and more, all tailored to meet individuals where they are in their health journey. The Wahls' Protocol has three main factors: A strict diet that focuses on vegetables, protein, and fermented foods - similar to the paleo diet A healthy lifestyle including getting adequate sleep and reducing stress Introduce MS specific exercises, I have the ideal examples for a routine that works in The MSing Link It’s all about nutrition. The Wahls Protocol is not just a diet, but a lifestyle change designed specifically to alleviate symptoms of MS. This regimen is similar to the paleo diet but with modifications tailored to support neurological health. The Diet Breakdown The protocol emphasizes the consumption of: Dark leafy vegetables, such as kale, to provide essential vitamins and antioxidants. Sulfur-rich vegetables like cabbage and mushrooms, which support detoxification pathways. High-quality protein sources, including fish and organ meats like liver and kidneys, rich in vital nutrients. Seaweed, nutritional yeast, and fermented foods to enhance gut health and provide a broad spectrum of vitamins and minerals. The Wahls Protocol eliminates all dairy, grains, and sweeteners (even natural ones like honey), aiming to reduce inflammation. Levels of the Wahls Diet To help people slowly adapt to this major lifestyle shift, the protocol is structured into three progressive levels: Wahls Diet (Level One): This foundation level removes gluten and dairy, focusing on a high intake of fruits and vegetables—9 cups daily. Wahls Paleo (Level Two): Building on the first level, this stage excludes grains and limits legumes and potatoes to two servings per week. It introduces seaweed and fermented foods for their health benefits. Wahls Paleo Plus (Level Three): The most advanced level, adopting a ketogenic approach with intermittent fasting. It restricts legumes, potatoes, and fruits (except for berries) and encourages coconut milk, aiming for two meals a day with an extended fasting period. Exercise and Physical Therapy Dr. Wahls shares my passion for exercise and physical therapy in managing MS. From personal experience, she knows the challenges that come with mobility issues. She firmly believes in the power of starting small and gradually increasing activity levels. "Adding e-stim to my physical therapy... I slowly began to regain strength," she recalls. Her message is clear: movement, no matter how minimal, is crucial. The Wahls Protocol: Do I recommend it as an MS specialist? As someone deeply committed to supporting individuals with MS, I’ve seen firsthand the transformation that comes from adopting a comprehensive approach to wellness. While such a major lifestyle change, such as the Wahl’s protocol, may not be of interest or achievable for everyone, it’s certainly worth considering given its effectiveness and popularity within the MS community. The most important aspect to consider when implementing any change into your life to work through MS symptoms is this - listen to your body. What may receive glowing reviews online may not do the same for you. Diet, exercise, and lifestyle changes all impact physiology differently. Above all, be kind to yourself as you navigate solutions that take time to develop. Considering The Wahls Protocol? Start here. There are several people inside The MSing Link program also utilizing The Wahl’s Protocol with great success! It’s been so helpful to see how deliberate physical plans can make a world of a difference in addressing symptoms. I created The MSing Link, an online wellness program designed to empower those with MS to take control of their health through education, support, and community. Dr. Terry Wahls was one of the monthly guest speakers inside the program, providing a ton of knowledge on what the Protocol is and most importantly how to start. Like the Wahls Protocol, The MSing Link is about making informed choices that lead to a healthier, more vibrant life. For those looking to jumpstart their journey, I invite you to join our Free 5-Day MS Strength Training Challenge. It’s a perfect way to test the waters of exercise tailored for MS, guided by principles that align with Dr. Wahls' teachings. Dr. Wahls' success and the positive outcomes of those who’ve followed her protocol speak volumes. It’s a testament to the power of diet, exercise, and lifestyle changes in managing autoimmune conditions. As Dr. Wahls herself puts it, "Food is powerful medicine." By embracing this principle and making informed, health-promoting choices, individuals with MS can reclaim a sense of control over their health. Remember, whether it's through The Wahls Protocol, The MSing Link program, or joining our strength training challenge, the journey to wellness begins with taking that first step. Let's walk this path together, embracing each day with hope, determination, and the knowledge that we have the power to not let MS symptoms control your life, but put you in the driver's seat instead. I never realized how much food had an impact on me until I started the Wahls diet, and it completely transformed my life.Perhaps you’ve heard of the Wahls diet (actually called The Wahls Protocol), or other anti-inflammatory diets (AIP) for chronic conditions? 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