Healthy Eating with Neuropathy

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Some Causes of Nerve Damage

- Heavy metals
- Vitamin toxicity and deficiency - B6, B12 and folate
- Prolonged high blood glucose with diabetes
- Autoimmune factors that cause inflammation of the nerves
Food, Nutrition and Neuropathy

- Food components in relation to neuropathy
- Gut health and brain chemistry
- Functional concerns
- Easy ways to achieve healthy eating
Heavy Metals

- Lead
- Arsenic
- Thallium
- Mercury
Lead

• Can leach from the main water pipe into the household

• Use an NSF - Certified filter on your faucet

• Use only cold tap water that has been thoroughly flushed from pipes

• Avoid imported pottery or leaded crystal to store or serve food
Lead
Eat a Healthy Diet to Help Decrease Lead Absorption

- Calcium keeps your bones strong and the lead out
- Iron blocks lead from being absorbed
- Vitamin C helps the body absorb iron better, but may also help with getting rid of lead
Arsenic

• Can be found in water, food, soil and air

• Rice has higher concentrations than other grains - brown higher than white

• To reduce arsenic intake consume a variety of grains
Thallium

- Primarily produced from coal burning and smelting and then enters the air, water and soil
- Can be absorbed by plants
- Can build up in fish and shellfish
- Don’t eat too much of any one thing and balance the types of fruits and vegetables you are eating
Mercury

- Found in the form of methyl mercury in seafood in varying levels

- Seafood choices lower in mercury include: Salmon, Anchovies, Herring, Shad, Sardines, Pacific Oysters, Trout, Atlantic and Pacific Mackerel (not King Mackerel)

- 2015 Dietary Guidelines - Recommend at least 8 ounces per week

- Some studies show eating fish outweighs the risks related to Mercury

- Wild versus farmed salmon study evidence is conflicting
Vitamin B6

- Excess can cause neuropathy

- In the U.S. most obtain Vitamin B6 from fortified cereals, beef, poultry, starchy vegetables and some non-citrus fruits

- High intakes of Vitamin B6 from food sources have not been reported to cause adverse effects
Vitamin B12

- Inadequate intake may worsen existing peripheral neuropathy
- Metformin use, vegetarians and older adults are at risk
- Talk with your doctor about getting a blood test
- Foods high in Vitamin B12 include poultry, lean meats, eggs and fortified cereals
Folate

• Older adults with a gene variant linked to low Vitamin B12 may have a greater risk of peripheral neuropathy if they have high folate intake

• Keep folic acid intake close to recommended levels

• Sources include: orange juice, spinach, Romaine lettuce, broccoli, peanuts, avocado, enriched grain products and fortified breakfast cereals

• Use caution when taking supplements
Diabetes and Neuropathy

- Primary cause is prolonged high blood glucose
- Main focus is bringing blood sugar levels under better control
- Control carbs
- Try a vegan diet - DINE study showed better A1C
- Limit alcohol - alcohol may worsen symptoms and make it harder to control blood sugars
Gut Health and Brain Chemistry

• Emerging research suggests that gut bacteria influence many metabolic functions

• Microbiome - microbial residents of our gut and also skin, eyes and nasal passages

• Microbiota - microorganisms themselves
Microbiota and Mood

- Psychological and physiological stress affects the gut in ways that alter the microbiota and foster dysbiosis, bacterial overgrowth and intestinal permeability.

- These changes trigger inflammation.

- Preliminary research indicates that changes to the microbiome may affect things such as mood, anxiety, memory and concentration.

- Anti-inflammatory diet could provide some benefit - no large scale studies that clarify the role of diet.
Develop a Healthful Gut Microbiota

- Plant based diet
- Probiotics - yogurt and kefir
- Antioxidants
Functional Concerns

• If your extremity numbness is severe, keep pre-cut, ready to eat fruits and vegetables on hand to reduce stress and pain involved with meal preparation.

• Use well padded pot holders when cooking.
Inflammation and Diet

• Chronic (or ongoing) inflammation occurs when the immune system attacks the body’s healthy cells leading to autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

• Evidence supporting the impact of specific foods on inflammation and the body is limited.

• Some foods have the capacity to suppress inflammation, but its unclear how often and how much is needed.
Promising Foods

- Fatty fish
- Berries
- Tart cherry juice
Current Science

• Overall good nutrition to help enhance the body’s immune system and provide antioxidants to reduce inflammatory stress.
Healthy Fats

- Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids
- Reduce inflammation
- Help regulate membrane function
Eating to Reduce Inflammation

- Let fruits and vegetables make up at least half of your plate at meals.
- Include fresh, frozen or dried berries and cherries.
- Eat a variety of vegetables, including leafy greens such as kale, chard and Brussels sprouts.
- Opt for plant-based sources of protein including beans, nuts and seeds.
Eating to Reduce Inflammation

• Include whole grains such as brown, black or wild rice, whole oats or barley and whole wheat bread

• Choose heart healthy fats including olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds

• Try to include fatty fish such as salmon, sardines and anchovies to get a heart healthy dose of omega-3 fatty acids.
Minimize Sodium

• Season your meals with fresh herbs and spices for flavor and extra antioxidants.
Recommended Supplements for Neuropathy

- Alpha lipoic acid is used frequently in Europe.
- Fish oil, evening primrose oil and curcumin (found in turmeric) might be helpful.
- Discuss the use of any kind of supplements with your doctor.
Lifestyle Factors

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get adequate sleep
- Engage in regular physical activity
Thank You For Having Me!

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