

The Mind & Body Centre

(Clinic & Research Unit)



**The Management of
Multiple Sclerosis
by Natural Methods.**

*(Introduction - before you start
Part 1 - relief of symptoms
Part 2 - stabilisation/management
Part 3 - re-myelination/re-generation)*

**by
Bob Banham.**

Part 2 - stabilisation/management

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b) Stabilisation/Management

Stabilisation of any condition is obviously necessary before improvement can take place. There are many ways we can achieve this and a selection of various natural therapies can provide a management programme for each individual.

Above all, if it works for you, use it in your programme. Remember that you are the only person who can be 100% responsible for your health. It has taken me over 10 years to work out my own PMP but, using the information that is presented here and that which is available elsewhere, I believe anyone can go a long way to managing not just MS, but the majority of conditions.

Our research suggests that the following can be useful: -

- (i) **Diet** - Diet is important for several reasons. We will not give dietary recommendations, but rather explore the various theories and reasons for individual diets. Once again, **you** have to see what is best for **you**.

There have been literally hundreds of suggestions regarding most suitable diet for the management of M.S.

Firstly, let's discuss basic rules for diet, which are generally agreed by virtually all authorities, both conventional and 'alternative', to be important considerations for good health.

- (i) Eat 'organic' and/or raw fruit and vegetables as far as possible. If you have a garden and are physically able, grow your own. Otherwise, you can get organic vegetables virtually anywhere these days, even in the supermarkets. Wash well and enjoy the real taste of food!

The Organic Directory compiled and edited by Clive Litchfield and published by Green Earth Books (ISBN - 1 900322 03 X) gives a county-by-county guide to buying organically grown fruit and veg. in England, Scotland and Wales. A bit more expensive than the genetically modified/hybridised and pre-packed sort you may be used to but, nutritionally and flavour-wise, there is no comparison.

- (ii) Sprout some seeds. These are the very simplest raw food and are very easy to grow in a kitchen or warm conservatory. Alfalfa, sunflower seeds, mung beans, pumpkin seeds and lots more will give you cheap, easily obtained, highly nutritious and tasty food.
- (iii) Avoid all artificial additives, colours, flavourings, preservatives and sweeteners wherever and whenever possible. All artificial (and natural if there is an allergy) additives will create a load on the body's energy system and one of the worst culprits is **Aspartame**.

I include the following information:

ASPARTAME

Aspartame was not approved until 1981, in dry foods. For over eight years the FDA refused to approve it because of the seizures and brain tumours this drug produced in lab animals. The FDA continued to refuse to approve it until President Reagan took office (a friend of Searle) and fired the FDA Commissioner who wouldn't approve it. Dr. Arthur Hull Hayes was appointed as commissioner. Even then there was so much opposition to approval that a Board of Inquiry was set up. The Board said: "Do not approve aspartame". Dr. Hayes OVERRULED his own Board of Inquiry.

Shortly after Commissioner Arthur Hull Hayes, Jr., approved the use of aspartame in carbonated beverages, he left for a position with G.D. Searle's Public Relations firm.

Long-Term Damage.

It appears to cause slow, silent damage in those unfortunate enough to not have immediate reactions and a reason to avoid it. It may take one year, five years, 10 years, or 40 years, but it seems to cause some reversible and some irreversible changes in health over long-term use.

METHANOL (AKA WOOD ALCOHOL/POISON) (10% OF ASPARTAME)

Methanol/wood alcohol is a deadly poison. People may recall that methanol was the poison that has caused some "skid row" alcoholics to end up blind or dead. Methanol is gradually released in the small intestine when the methyl group of aspartame encounters the enzyme chymotrypsin.

The absorption of methanol into the body is sped up considerably when free methanol is ingested. Free methanol is created from aspartame when it is heated to above 86 Fahrenheit (30 Centigrade). This would occur when aspartame-containing product is improperly stored or when it is heated (e.g., as part of a "food" product such as Jelly).

Methanol breaks down into formic acid and formaldehyde in the body. Formaldehyde is a deadly neurotoxin. An EPA assessment of methanol states that methanol "is considered a cumulative poison due to the low rate of excretion once it is absorbed. In the body, methanol is oxidized to formaldehyde and formic acid; both of these metabolites are toxic." They recommend a limit of consumption of 7.8 mg/day. A one-litre (approx. 1 quart) aspartame-sweetened beverage contains about 56 mg of methanol. Heavy users of aspartame-containing products consume as much as 250 mg of methanol daily or 32 times the EPA limit.

The most well known problems from methanol poisoning are vision problems. Formaldehyde is a known carcinogen, causes retinal damage, interferes with DNA replication, and causes birth defects. Due to the lack of a couple of key enzymes, humans are many times more sensitive to the toxic effects of methanol than animals. Therefore, tests of aspartame or methanol on animals do not accurately reflect the danger for humans. As pointed out by Dr Woodrow C. Monte, Director of the Food Science and Nutrition Laboratory at Arizona State University, "There are no human or mammalian studies to evaluate the possible mutagenic, teratogenic, or carcinogenic effects of chronic administration of methyl alcohol."

It has been pointed out that fruit juices and alcoholic beverages contain small amounts of methanol. It is important to remember, that the methanol in natural products never appears alone. In every case, ethanol is present, usually in much higher amounts. Ethanol is an antidote for methanol toxicity in humans. The troops of Desert Storm were "treated" to large amounts of aspartame-sweetened beverages, which had been heated to over 86 degrees F. in the Saudi Arabian sun. Many of them returned home with numerous disorders similar to what has been seen in persons who have been chemically poisoned by formaldehyde. The free methanol in the beverages may have been a contributing factor in these illnesses. Other breakdown products of aspartame such as DKP may also have been a factor.

In a 1993 act that can only be described as "unconscionable", the FDA approved aspartame as an ingredient in numerous food items that would always be heated to above 86°degrees F (30°Degrees C).

Much worse, on 27 June 1996, without public notice, the FDA removed all restrictions from aspartame allowing it to be used in everything, including all heated and baked goods.

The truth about aspartame's toxicity is far different than what the NutraSweet Company would have you readers believe. In February of 1994, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released the listing of adverse reactions reported to the FDA (DHHS 1994). Aspartame accounted for more than 75% of all adverse reactions reported to the FDA's Adverse Reaction Monitoring System (ARMS). By the FDA's own admission fewer than ONE PERCENT of those who have problems with something they consume ever report it to the FDA. This balloons the almost 10,000 complaints they once had to around a million. However, the FDA has a record keeping problem (they never did respond to the certified letter from the WEBMASTER of this site... a major victim!) and they tend to discourage or even misdirect complaints, at least on aspartame. The fact remains, though, that MOST victims don't have a clue that aspartame may be the cause of their many problems! Many reactions to aspartame were very serious including seizures and death. Those reactions included:

Abdominal Pain	Impotency and Sexual Problems
Anxiety attacks	Inability to concentrate
Arthritis	Infection Susceptibility
Asthma	Insomnia
Asthmatic Reactions	Irritability
Bloating, Oedema (Fluid Retention)	Itching
Brain Cancer (Pre-approval studies in animals)	Joint Pains
Breathing difficulties	Laryngitis
Burning eyes or throat	"Like thinking in a fog"
Burning Urination	Marked Personality Changes
Can't think straight	Memory loss
Chest Pains	Menstrual Problems or Changes
Chronic cough	Migraines and Severe Headaches
Chronic Fatigue	Muscle spasms
Confusion	Nausea or Vomiting
Death	Numbness or Tingling of Extremities
Depression	Other Allergic-Like Reactions
Diarrhoea	Panic Attacks
Dizziness	Phobias
Excessive Thirst or Hunger	Poor memory
Fatigue	Rapid Heart Beat
Feel unreal	Rashes
Flushing of face	Seizures and Convulsions
Hair Loss (Baldness) or Thinning of Hair	Slurring of Speech
Headaches/Migraines dizziness	Swallowing Pain
Hearing Loss	Tachycardia
Heart palpitations	Tremors
Hives (Urticaria)	Tinnitus
Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)	Vertigo
Hypoglycaemia or Hyperglycaemia	Vision Loss
	Weight gain

Aspartame Disease Mimics Symptoms or Worsens the Following Diseases

Fibromyalgia	Alzheimer's Disease
Arthritis	Birth Defects
Multiple Sclerosis (MS)	Parkinson's Disease
Lupus	Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS)
Diabetes and Diabetic Complications	Epilepsy
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome	Lymphoma
Lyme Disease	Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
Depression and other Psychological Disorders	Panic Disorder

How it happens:

Methanol, from aspartame, is released in the small intestine when the methyl group of aspartame encounters the enzyme chymotrypsin (Stegink 1984, page 143). Free methanol begins to form in liquid aspartame-containing products at temperatures above 86 degrees F., also within the human body.

The methanol is then converted to formaldehyde. The formaldehyde converts to formic acid, a sting poison. Toxic formic acid is used as an activator to strip epoxy and urethane coatings. Imagine what it does to your tissues!

Phenylalanine and aspartic acid, 90% of aspartame, are amino acids normally used in synthesis of protoplasm when supplied by the foods we eat. But when unaccompanied by other amino acids we use [there are 20], they are neurotoxins.

That is why a warning for phenylketonurics is found on EQUAL and other aspartame products. Phenylketonurics are 2% of the population with extreme sensitivity to this chemical unless it's present in food. It gets you too, causing brain disorders and birth defects! Finally, the phenylalanine breaks down into DKP, a brain tumour agent.

In other words: Aspartame converts to dangerous by-products that have no natural countermeasures. A dieter's empty stomach accelerates these conversions and amplifies the damage. Components of aspartame go straight to the brain, damage that causes headaches, mental confusion, seizures and faulty balance. Lab rats and other test animals died of brain tumours.

Despite the claims of Monsanto and bedfellows:

1. Methanol from alcohol and juices does not get converted to formaldehyde to any significant extent. There is very strong evidence to confirm this fact for alcoholic beverages and fairly strong evidence for juices.
2. Formaldehyde obtained from methanol is very toxic in 'very small' doses as seen by recent research.
3. Aspartame causes chronic toxicity reactions/damage due to the methanol to formaldehyde and other break down products despite what is claimed otherwise by the very short, industry-funded experiments using a test substance that is chemically different and absorbed differently than what is available to the general public. "Strangely enough", almost all independent studies show that aspartame can cause health problems.
4. A common ploy from Monsanto is to claim that aspartame is "safe" yet a few select people may have "allergic" reactions to it. This is typical Monsanto nonsense, of course. Their own research shows that it does not cause "allergic" reactions. It is their way of trying to minimize and hide the huge numbers of toxicity reactions and damage that people are experiencing from the long-term use of aspartame.

Summary

Given the following points, it is definitely premature for researchers to discount the role of methanol in aspartame side effects:

1. The amount of methanol ingested from aspartame is unprecedented in human history. Methanol from fruit juice ingestion does not even approach the quantity of methanol ingested from aspartame, especially in persons who ingest one to three litres (or more) of diet beverages every day. Unlike methanol from aspartame, methanol from natural products is probably not absorbed or converted to its toxic metabolites in significant amounts as discussed earlier.
2. Lack of laboratory-detectable changes in plasma formic acid and formaldehyde levels do not preclude damage being caused by these toxic metabolites. Laboratory-detectable changes in formate levels are often not found in short exposures to methanol.
3. Aspartame-containing products often provide little or no nutrients, which may protect against chronic methanol poisoning and are often consumed in between meals. Persons who ingest aspartame-containing products are often

dieting and more likely to have nutritional deficiencies than persons who take the time to make fresh juices.

4. Persons with certain health conditions or on certain drugs may be much more susceptible to chronic methanol poisoning.

5. Chronic diseases and side effects from slow poisons often build silently over a long period of time. Many chronic diseases, which seem to appear suddenly, have actually been building in the body over many years.

6. An increasing body of research is showing that many people are highly sensitive to low doses of formaldehyde in the environment. Environmental exposure to formaldehyde and ingestion of methanol (which converts to formaldehyde) from aspartame likely has a cumulative deleterious effect.

7. Formic acid has been shown to slowly accumulate in various parts of the body. Formic acid has been shown to inhibit oxygen metabolism.

8. There are a very large and growing number of persons who are experiencing chronic health problems similar to the side effects of chronic methanol poisoning when ingesting aspartame-containing products for a significant length of time. This includes many cases of eye damage similar to the type of eye damage seen in methanol poisoning cases.

Toxicity Effects of Aspartame Use Selection of Health Effects from Short-term and/or Long-Term Use Note: It often takes at least sixty days without any aspartame NutraSweet to see a significant improvement. Check all labels very carefully (including vitamins and pharmaceuticals). Look for the word "aspartame" on the label and avoid it. (Also, it is a good idea to avoid "acesulfame-k" or "sunette.") Finally, avoid getting nutrition information from junk food industry PR organizations such as IFIC or organizations that accept large sums of money from the junk and chemical food industry such as the American Dietetic Association.

If you are a user of any products with aspartame, and you have physical, visual, mental problems... take the 60-day no aspartame test. If, after two months with no aspartame your symptoms are either gone, or are much less severe, please get involved to get this neurotoxin off the market.

Article courtesy of: Mark Gold mgold@holisticmed.com

***** TAKE THE 60-DAY NO ASPARTAME TEST *****

If you hurt or have a problem that the doctors can't seem to cure... AND you use aspartame (now in over 6000 products), take the FREE 60-day no-aspartame at-home self-test and see what happens.

First... round up all products with aspartame as a sweetener and place them in a box, and then seal it for the duration of the "60-day no-aspartame" test (or until certain of the results of this self-test).

Second, create a log. Enter all the current problems/symptoms along with types and quantities of medication being used to combat those problems and symptoms. Include entries concerning both physical and mental observations for the next 60 days... or until you are convinced that aspartame was (or is not) the cause of one more or all of your problems.

During this test period READ all labels. If it says "sugar free" or "no-calorie" you might consider NOT consuming it... just to be sure. Someone mentioned that they may be teaming aspartame with sugar (yeah... with the real thing), as well as saccharin, acesulfame-k, and who knows what else.

When you have completed as much of the no-aspartame test as you feel necessary (minimum of three weeks)... do another inventory of your problems and symptoms... as well as then current levels of medications and their types. Remember to consider mood, vision and perceptions ... everything. If you lost some or all of your problems then you just had a free cure for them.

Continuing with the subject of diet:

As already stated, there are many, many different theories on proper diet for MS. Some of those you may have heard of or been recommended are the Swank Diet, Judy Graham's, Roger MacDougal's, John Pageler's, gluten free, dairy free, vegetarian, vegan, macrobiotic, the Hay Diet.....

Confused yet?

I'm going to include guidelines recommended by a nutritionist friend of mine, with whom I have discussed this subject at great length. Remember, guidelines are just that – guides. They are there to show you a direction and are infinitely flexible and adaptable. If they become too rigid, the stress caused by trying to adhere to them causes even more damage.

Dietary Guidelines

Some MS sufferers also find that they have allergies to common foods such as wheat, dairy products etc. Candida Albicans is also a common problem with MS, which needs treating, especially because this has such a dampening effect on the immune system. The symptoms of Candida are very similar to some of those experienced in MS and so it may be worth considering an Anti candida diet for a period of three months in order to eliminate the overgrowth of this organism from the body. (If you feel you would like to do this please request further information).

Finally one of the most important things to take on board when establishing a diet to help MS is that the foods should be organic. This is especially important in those foods, which tend to have the highest chemical dosages such as wholemeal foods - i.e. whole grains like wheat, rice, etc where the outer layers removed by refining processes will contain the chemical sprays. Milk, lettuces, meat, carrots are also particularly high sources of undesirable chemicals and should only be consumed if organic.

On the whole you want to make sure you are having a truly balanced diet -consisting in the main of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. The fresher the food the better, if you can grow your own vegetables or buy them from someone's back garden then you can be assured of freshness and vitality.

The foods to avoid are in a way rather obvious - sugar, coffee, chocolate, salt, highly seasoned foods. Processed, canned and frozen foods should all be avoided in the diet because not only are they deficient in nutrients, but they no longer have the 'life essence' of the fresh foods - think of the difference between canned asparagus and fresh and the reason speaks for itself.

Many MS sufferers have found that by removing gluten and dairy products from their diets they have had a significant decrease in their symptoms. To see if this works for you it is worth trying it out for a period of about six weeks to see what, if any effects this has on your well-being.

TO SUM UP,

WHAT YOU SHOULD BE EATING:

- Seed oils (cold pressed only) i.e. flax, sunflower, olive.

- Pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds (as fresh as possible)
- Oily fish i.e. tuna, mackerel, salmon, sardines etc. (see above).
- Fruit and vegetables, as much as possible and as fresh as possible.
- Whole grains such as brown rice, millet, buckwheat, also organic.
- Lots of green leafy vegetables
- Chicken, game i.e. hare, venison etc. no more than 2 times a week.
- Pulses and beans as a protein source instead of meat and cheeses.

SUPPLEMENTS

- 1 tspn. wheat grass juice powder or eight wheat grass tablets daily
- 3 tbsps. daily of Lecithin granules
- 1 tbspn daily of seed oils blend.
- 2 capsules Pure-gar 500mg daily
- 1 capsule Vitamin E 500iu. daily
- 1/2g Vitamin C powder daily.
- 5 capsules Evening Primrose Oil daily.

WHAT YOU SHOULD BE AVOIDING:

- Gluten containing foods, - wheat, barley, oats, rye.
- Sugar
- Alcohol
- Smoking
- All canned, processed and frozen foods
- Chocolate
- Salt
- Coffee, tea
- Dairy products

Mention was made in part one, of a technique called 'ki' (pronounced 'key') breathing. This comes from Korean martial arts and is a very efficient way of oxygenating the system and, from the oriental perspective, of increasing energy levels. We shall see in part 3 how it can also improve visualisation and regeneration.

Ki Breathing.

For a full explanation of ki breathing, see Koichi Tohei's book – Book of Ki: Co-ordinating Mind and Body in Daily Life. Published by Japan Publications Inc. ISBN 0-87040-379-6

My own teacher, Dr. He – Young Kimm, has been researching ki for over 40 years and I have found these type of exercises useful in three ways.

- (i) They provide the body with more oxygen and therefore with more energy.
- (ii) They provide a means whereby the individual can consciously bring errant functions and body parts under control! I.e. Provide a body-mind connection.
- (iii) Being progressively structured, they provide a means whereby the individual can work on improvement and increase of abilities.

SUPPLEMENTS

In order to try and slow down the process of the disease there are certain things we want to achieve:

- Oxygenate the system
- Strengthen the immunity
- Address any nutritional deficiencies

These supplements can help with this in various ways. In order that you can find out fully about the products, enclosed is a full information pack. But to give you a short introduction, read on...

WHEAT GRASS

Wheat grass is an excellent all round supplement, which addresses all of the above criteria. It is extremely high in chlorophyll, which, due to its closeness to the chemical structure of haemoglobin, helps to oxygenate the blood and help in cell detoxification.

In the tablet and juice powder form wheat grass contains over 90 different minerals, 12 vitamins and 19 amino acids in addition to its high chlorophyll levels. This perfect balance of nutrients is possible because of the rich soil and long growth cycle throughout the winter months, which allows the nutrients to be drawn out of the soil and to build up in the plant. This therefore makes it an excellent all round daily supplement.

MS puts the body under great stress. In such times nutrients are depleted much quicker than normal. Magnesium and the B vitamins are particularly important in that they have calming effects on the muscles and nerves. In tablet form wheat grass has other benefits since it is high in fibre, which can help improve the functioning and general health of the intestines. The chlorophyll content also helps to strengthen the immunity of the intestinal lining, which is very important in preventing allergies.

According to Chinese medicine, wheat grass is considered to be what is called 'cooling and cleansing'. This means that it is particularly appropriate for MS sufferers, as there appears to be a strong connection between the symptoms of MS and what the Chinese would consider to be symptoms of a dysfunctional liver. Wheat grass can help in the detoxification of the liver and the body as a whole. Its strong digestive properties also are considered to help those with liver excesses, slow digestion and gastro-intestinal inflammation. By strengthening the liver wheat grass will also help to fortify the immune system as a whole.

Wheat grass can also be used to help purge candida yeasts, which is often a particular problem in MS sufferers. To help in this way the tablets and/or powder mixed with water should be taken at the beginning of meals.

Wheat grass is harvested prior to the formation of gluten and is therefore suitable even for people with wheat allergy.

UP TIME

Up Time is a nutritional energy booster based on the green 'super foods' wheat grass, spirulina and alfalfa. It provides high quality nutrition, which is quickly absorbed into the blood stream to provide energy within about 20 - 30 minutes of being taken. As energy is one of the major problems with MS *Up Time* can play a significant role in enabling the user to continue to lead a full and active life by raising energy levels and increasing mental clarity. *Up Time* is so good at oxygenating the blood that long distance runners have even found that it prevents them from getting an oxygen deficit when running.

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is a very important supplement to include because it is such a multi-talented vitamin, which can play an important role in detoxifying the body. It is particularly important for when the body is undergoing stress as is the case with MS. Vitamin C plays a vital role in maintaining the health of the immune system as well as preventing viral and bacteriological infection. It has a tremendous ability to mobilise the body's immune system against infection by activating the white blood cells. It has been dubbed the 'anti-stress' vitamin because of its antioxidant

activity, which helps to mop up free radicals in the body and stop them from damaging the integrity of the cells. It has a great healing capacity and therefore should be considered an essential supplement.

PURE-GAR

In MS the immune system is usually very compromised, which can mean even a simple cold can have very debilitating effects. As the immune system is weak in the MS patient it is important that this is bolstered and every effort is made to ward off infections. Garlic is well documented as a natural antibiotic which can both help prevent infection as well as strengthen the immune system as a whole.

Four Seasons Pure-Gar is an extremely high potency garlic preparation made only from 100% pure organically grown garlic. It is 2½ times as potent as raw garlic but due to a unique cool drying process it has no after odour. The high potency capsules and vegan tablets enable high dosages to be taken, which provide significant amounts of the active ingredients in garlic known to have beneficial effects. In addition to this preventative and strengthening role on the immune system Pure-Gar also acts as an anti-fungal agent. This means that it can help rid the body of the Candida yeast, which is often an underlying problem in the MS sufferer.

Lecithin has commonly been found to be deficient in the MS sufferer. Lecithin is made up of choline and inositol. Choline is essential for the health of the myelin sheaths of the nerves, the principal component of the nerve fibres. Inositol is also found in large quantities in the spinal cord, nerves and in the brain and cerebral spinal fluid as well as aiding the metabolism of fats and helping to reduce blood cholesterol. Although eggs contain high amounts of lecithin they should be avoided because of their high saturated fat content. Instead a form of pure lecithin in granules is a good way to supplement the diet - available from health food shops and made by 'Lanes'. In addition rich sources of lecithin are soybean, tofu, tempeh, soy sprouts and soya milk which should all be considered an important part of an MS diet.

Acupuncture

Any MS management programme should include regular acupuncture. Even on a purely symptomatic level, acupuncture can help nerve function, relieve pain and improve digestion, elimination and energy levels.

I have been using acupuncture for MS as well as a host of other conditions for well over 15 years and I include here part of a text I had posted on the internet whilst talking about the relationship between martial arts, acupuncture and ki breathing.

From "Other Useful Points"

*'The last point I'm going to discuss is one called **Jok Sam Ri (ST 36)** and I haven't spotted it anywhere in the syllabus yet. Of course I'm only a 4th dan so that doesn't mean it's not there! It's located about three inches below the kneecap and to the outside of the shinbone. Jok sam ri means 'leg three miles' and the name comes from the re-energising effect of the point. If you have walked so far that your legs will carry you no further, massaging this point on both legs will allow you to walk another three miles! A good one to remember after a hard kick workout!*

I have a patient who has had to have a lot of surgery on her legs and now has numerous plates and pins in them. Because of all the cutting and subsequent scar tissue, she gets pain, numbness and tiredness in her legs and feet and there's nothing that can stop or reverse it. Acupuncture once every three weeks keeps her going though. It controls the pain (acupuncture stimulates the body to release endorphins), stimulates nerve function (and I am sure it assists regeneration) and the use of jok sam ri gives her legs the energy to see her through the next 3 weeks.'

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Kombucha

Kombucha is something which is of inestimable value in the management of MS as well as most other conditions. My wife Nicky and I, are part of The Kombucha Network and should you wish to try kombucha, we can supply you with a culture and brewing advice.

Below is reproduced the letter I send with the culture to people with MS:

Thank you for your enquiry about Kombucha. The Kombucha Network has asked me to deal with all enquiries concerning the use of Kombucha in the management of multiple sclerosis and I would just like to tell you a little bit about my experiences with "The Miracle Fungus".

I was diagnosed with MS in 1986 and spent the next seven or eight years designing a personal management programme for my condition. Three years prior to my diagnosis I trained as an acupuncturist and herbalist so my search for suitable therapies was obviously centred around the more 'alternative' forms of medicine. In fact, since my diagnosis I have not received treatment of any kind from western doctors.

Instead I have used therapies as diverse as kinesiology, acupuncture, Ayurveda, western and Chinese herbal medicine, meditation and ki breathing. This latter technique comes from a system of Korean martial arts with which I have been involved for almost thirty years. We have a full time martial arts and therapy centre in Norwich which treats people with MS as well as a whole range of other conditions and we are in the process of setting up trials to assess the use of several therapies for MS sufferers. If you would like more information on this, please get in touch.

I personally drink Kombucha every day and have done so for more than 4 years now. Together with the other therapies I use, I seem to have reached a state of stability which allows me to do pretty much what I want, provided I remember that I still have MS!

I have just returned from teaching a martial arts seminar in Holland and I travel to America twice a year to continue my own training. I also teach in several local schools and lecture widely. Ten years ago I couldn't walk across the road without my wife's help and since drinking Kombucha I seem to have gone from strength to strength.

This makes a lot of sense if you consider that two of the main benefits from Kombucha are an increase in the status of the immune system and the detoxification of the liver.

Kombucha is not a panacea but used intelligently, together with other lifestyle changes, natural therapies or even drug therapy, it cannot help but be beneficial.

If you want further information, I am always willing to talk, advise, answer questions etc. so call me or write to me at above address.

Yours sincerely,

R. Banham.

The full story of my involvement is told in "Kombucha Tea - for your health and healing" by Alick and Mari Bartholomew. (by kind permission of the authors)

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BOB BANHAM

(aged 47) was first diagnosed as having MS in 1986, although he had a number of symptoms the year before. This is how he describes his involvement with Kombucha tea:

'At first I just experienced odd pain and numbness in various parts of the body, but this soon degenerated into the classic symptoms of MS: blurred/double vision, urgency and/or inability to urinate, sudden loss of balance and strength in the legs, and then ultimately the inability to walk at all without my wife's support.

"I had been involved in martial arts for the previous twenty years and in 1982 had commenced a three year clinical training in acupuncture and Western herbalism. As well as studying Chinese herbal medicine and homoeopathy, I had also learned Transcendental Meditation, and in 1985 spent several months in the Far East, specifically the Philippines and Australia, studying acupuncture, native herbalism and other traditional healing systems.

'All this I see as a grounding for what I was going to have to do over the next ten years. I actually think I was being 'set up'. Upon diagnosis, I was offered ACTH injections by my GP, which I declined. I have in the past eleven year since my diagnosis received no treatment of any kind from conventional Western medicine, but as you will see from the above, I had a very clear direction in which to look for help.

"I spent the next 7-8 years searching for anything within the fields of natural medicine which might be of value- I looked at acupuncture, of course. I had experience with MS in this field as I had in the past treated three or four sufferers. I looked at herbal medicine, both Western and Chinese. I looked at Ayurveda (traditional Indian medicine), aromatherapy, reflexology, kinesiology, diet, health supplements, exercise, yoga and yogic -type breathing exercises and, of course, meditation and visualisation.

"I managed to devise a programme which enabled me to start walking properly again, allowed me to continue teaching martial arts and to practise acupuncture, albeit at a more leisurely pace - and then I discovered Kombucha.

"I first started drinking Kombucha in 1993-4, after being given a culture by a friend who knew very little about it. He didn't know that it was said to benefit MS, and I had no more than a bad photocopy of some hand-written instructions for brewing.

"We then discovered that there was anecdotal evidence that Kombucha could help in cases of MS, but there was no information on dosage, so I started drinking about a pint a day to see what would happen. Quite quickly there was a very pronounced detoxifying effect - headache, bad breath, feeling 'spaced-out', etc - which I recognise from fasting, and then things began to settle down.

"It was after drinking Kombucha daily for four months that my wife said 'I think you seem to have a little more energy; I wonder if it's the Kombucha?' To be honest, I hadn't noticed any difference or, if I had, I wasn't placing too much importance on it, in case it was just imagination or wishful thinking. It's very easy to clutch at any straw that drifts within reach, and I had always resisted that impulse.

'Any way, I knew that the only way to be sure was to see what happened when I stopped, and then to start drinking it again and note any changes. Well, there were definite differences within a week of stopping my daily dose of the 'magic brew'. Energy levels dropped, physical ability declined and psychologically I felt a lot less positive, almost apathetic. After two weeks I started back on it and, within a week or so this time, I started to notice improvements again.

"I have spoken at some length to the Myelin Trust (one of the support organisations for MS), and they recommend a starting dose of 1 teaspoonful three times a day, because some people with MS are very weak and sensitive. I have never taken less than three good-sized glasses a day (about 1-1 1/2 pints; 300 -450-mls), and have never experienced any adverse effects after that first time." [Detoxification is very individual; we suggest that the recommended dose be followed, after first building up from smaller amounts. Ed]

"Since joining the Kombucha Network, we have provided cultures to people with MS in Britain and all over Europe! And I see my next job as collating the experiences of these people and putting together the result in a form that will allow the medical profession to take this ancient gift seriously. It has helped to change my life, or at least has helped me to deal with the changes life has thrust upon me, and I know that I am not alone.

"I stop taking Kombucha periodically for a week or so every couple of months now, as I think it is important as with any medicine, to allow the body to normalise and to let one assess the effects. I want to stress that I have no concerns whatever about its use in MS management, or with any other health

problem; or if it is used just as a tonic, a detoxifier or an energy booster. I think most adverse criticism comes from people or organisations who would like to make money from it, but realise they can't in the U.K. Tough!

OTHER SUPPLEMENTS

I have found the following to be of some use. Try them and if you seem to do better for them, keep using them.

Gingko Biloba - Helps circulation, particularly in the brain.

DHEA - A naturally occurring hormone from wild yam or mares' urine! There are health considerations, particularly if pregnant. Some people have found benefit but I discontinued after 18 months as I felt no significant improvement. You cannot get DHEA in this country.

Crambark (*Viburnum opulus*) - Useful when muscles misbehave.

The Organic Directory

Compiled and edited by Clive Litchfield

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Janet Star Hull

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