



# Overcoming Myasthenia Gravis Symptoms on a Plant-Based Diet

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November 15 2021

In the fall of 1992, I started feeling some minor muscular weakness. I didn't think too much of it, until one day I woke up and couldn't open one eye. I went to my doctor, who sent me to a neurologist. I was diagnosed with myasthenia gravis, a rare neuromuscular disease. I was told that MG was incurable, that I would have to be on medication for the rest of my life, and that my life expectancy would be shortened. The doctors prescribed prednisone and several other heavy-duty drugs.

In the years that followed, I frequently experienced severe symptoms such as double vision, difficulties with speaking and swallowing, and muscle weakness. Some days I couldn't even hold my head up.

But I never gave up. I continued searching for ways to improve my health. I started practicing tai chi and qi gong. I walked several miles daily. I ate what I thought were healthy foods, such as white meat chicken, turkey, and fish. Still, my symptoms persisted. At one point, they got so severe that I wound up in the ICU for five days.

## A Life-Changing Lecture

Then, in 2006, I heard a clinical nutritionist speak. He explained that eating animal products can compromise the [immune system](#). He recommended that patients with MG or any autoimmune disease switch to a whole-food, plant-based diet. I made the switch that day, and in just a few months, my symptoms disappeared. Eventually, I was able to phase out all medications.

Later that year, a serious health scare inspired my husband, Bob, to join me in this way of eating. He'd had a small tumor on his left kidney removed, and the surgeon advised him that even though they'd removed the entire growth, this type of tumor had been known to return. Having witnessed my health transformation, Bob thought that a WFPB diet might help reduce the risk of kidney [cancer](#) recurrence.

## Thriving in Our 80s

It's been 15 years, and we're both feeling better than ever. Bob remains cancer-free, and my MG symptoms never resurfaced. Now in our 80s, we're all about healthy aging, and it is our privilege to share our stories in the hope that we might inspire others. We believe that eating this way has saved our lives, and we are very thankful.

A strong immune system is the key to being healthy at any age—whether you are 28 or 82! These are the steps that we use to nourish healthy immune systems and increase our protection from disease.

1. **Eat more plants.** Include more [whole grains](#), fruits, and vegetables in your diet, and significantly reduce—or, better yet, eliminate—added sugar, oil, and salt, as well as meat and [dairy products](#).
2. **Stress less.** [Studies have shown](#) that stress can significantly compromise the immune system. Find healthy ways to relax. Meditation and a Chinese wellness practice called qigong are two ways that we reduce stress.
3. **Exercise regularly.** Get some form of exercise every day, whether it's walking, qigong, yoga, biking, or any activity you enjoy.
4. **Sleep plenty.** Growing evidence shows that [sleep is very important](#) to immunological health. Experts recommend that healthy adults get [7-9 hours of sleep each night](#).

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path. To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#).