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ANIMATION SCRIPT

COULD A HEALTHY DIET COMBAT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?
PROFESSOR LUCINDA BLACK

TO MAKE THE MOST OUT OF THIS SCRIPT, YOU COULD:

• Stick it in your book as a record of watching Lucinda's animation

• Pause the animation and make notes as you go

• Add your own illustrations to the sheet

• Create your own animation to accompany it

• Add notes from classroom discussions

• Make notes of areas you will investigate further

• Make notes of key words and definitions

• Add questions you would like answered – you can message Lucinda through the comments box at the bottom of her article:

www.futurumcareers.com/could-a-healthy-diet-combat-multiple-sclerosis

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SCRIPT:

Can we prevent and manage diseases by choosing what we eat? This is the overarching question that nutritional epidemiologists try to answer. Professor Lucinda Black and her team are exploring the links between diet and multiple sclerosis.

Multiple sclerosis, or MS, is a disease that affects the central nervous system. It is caused when the myelin, the protective sheath surrounding nerves, becomes damaged, delaying or blocking signals between the brain and the rest of the body, causing symptoms including numbness, loss of vision and difficulty walking.

While there is no cure yet for MS, scientists around the world are working hard to find one. Lucinda and her team hope to discover whether healthy eating can help reduce the likelihood of developing MS, to establish what eating habits are best for managing symptoms, and to find out if healthy eating can help slow the progression of the disease. Healthy eating is important for everyone. For people at high risk of MS, such as those with a close family member who has MS, a healthy diet may help prevent onset of the disease.

By analysing and comparing the diets of people with and without MS, Lucinda's team found there was a link between diet and the risk of getting MS. A healthy diet that was high in poultry, fish, eggs, vegetables and legumes was linked to a lower risk of getting MS. The team also discovered the higher consumption of ultra-processed foods was linked to a higher risk of getting MS.

Having identified some foods that may be important for the risk of getting MS, Lucinda and her team are now looking at links between these foods and how quickly the disease progresses in people who already have MS. Could certain foods help reduce the severity of MS?

There is a lot of confusing information about healthy eating for people with MS. Searching online for 'diet and MS' gives millions of results, including some websites that recommend going vegan and others that recommend eating lots of meat!

While a general healthy diet can help combat common problems of MS, such as fatigue and obesity, there is not yet enough scientific evidence to say conclusively whether specific diets, foods or nutrients might help reduce the severity of the disease. This highlights the importance of Lucinda's research.

The team is now developing a nutrition education programme specifically for people with MS and designed with people with MS, giving participants a chance to hear from experts and share their experiences with each other. What could you achieve as a nutritional epidemiologist?