



## Nutrition and Post Polio Syndrome

Janice Hartman

*This article was originally written in 1997, but the nutrition information is still as valid today as it was then. Additional information on PPS Nutrition is now on my website:*

<http://www.reocities.com/arojann.geo/ppsnutrition.html>

*Janice Hartman, February 2001.*

Let me first say that I am no expert here, but my training is in Nutrition and Education. I must caution all of you trying to lose weight to please do it sensibly. A low fat diet (with portion control) and exercise (to whatever degree you can do) works the best. Jane Brody recommends in her Nutrition Book a diet high in fiber, but balanced with all foods. A weight loss of one to two pounds a week is recommended. With fast weight loss muscle tissue is diminished, and even worse when you regain weight it is added as fat, not muscle tissue. Thus, yo-yo dieting where you lose - gain, lose - gain is not recommended. If you fall into the category of morbidly obese, you should be under a doctor's care for more options.

Diet pills are dangerous. Protein diets are dangerous. Be very careful.

Seek out a knowledgeable doctor. A multivitamin might be advisable, if you can tolerate it. Megavitamins can be a problem and ought to only be attempted under a doctor's care. Some studies with vitamin B-6 have proven mega doses of this vitamin can help certain rare disorders, but people who self treat with mega doses of B-6 risk severe NERVE damage. Be cautious. Excesses of water soluble vitamins are also excreted from the body and sometimes only create a placebo effect.

FYI: Vitamins are either water soluble (8 B vitamins and C) or fat soluble (vitamins A, D, E, and K). Since the fat soluble are stored in the body, they can build up to toxic levels. The water soluble vitamins are not generally stored and the excess are washed out of the body through urine or sweat. They need to be replaced daily.

Be aware of the salt you use in and on your foods. Salt is a combination of sodium and chloride (NaCl). Sodium (Na) occurs naturally in foods. However, in natural unprocessed foods, sodium is low and phosphorus is high. In processed foods, they are generally high in sodium (or even salt) and low in phosphorus.

Try to eat foods in as close to their natural state as possible. Fresh fruits and vegetables (high in fiber), grains like oatmeal instead of processed sugar (or honey) laden foods. Read labels: for cereals look under Total Carbohydrates in Nutrition Facts, the Sugars should be 0 g (grams) to not more than 6 g. Also, change to lower fat (or low fat) dairy products. You can save many fat calories by switching to a lower fat

milk . If you drink whole milk switch to 2% , if your drinking 2% try 1%, etc. You still get all the calcium and added vit A and D in low fat. I don't advocate raw meats, fish, as a natural food. Trim the visible fat, take the skin off the chicken and bake, don't fry whenever possible.

Vegetarianism may prove to be beneficial to some people. Just remember that you need to include other sources of protein if you eliminate meats entirely. Vegetarians can get protein if they eat dairy or eggs. If not, protein is found in nuts and nut butters, beans and vegetables. There are web sites for vegetarian foods that are worth checking out.

I am not trying to add to the "well, what can we eat now?" syndrome. If your eating habits are terrible, just try to change a little at a time. If fresh fruit is too expensive (but look for bargains) buy canned. Just try to read labels. Enjoy treats even if you are eating well. I like cookies, but generally make my own or buy low fat as treats (mine are better).

Use medications that work for you, but only try one at a time to see its effects. Use the lowest dosage that works. Be careful with drug interactions. Drugs have side effects depending on the person. The question is: do the benefits outweigh the risks? Like nausea, does it go away? You decide if it is working for you.

I have been taking note of the many medications than can help PPS pain so I will know what I can try if my present meds don't work anymore. Hope no one is attempting to try them all, unless your need is great and you have doctors advise. Henry has given very sound [information on the use of low dosages of anti-depressants](#) that are helping some people. Keep an open mind, learn to hear what your body is trying to tell you, practice pacing yourself, and learn to say no.

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I am first and foremost the mother of three boys. Post Polio Survivor from 1953.

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Home Economics Teacher.

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Editorial Ass't for "Whole Foods for the Whole Family" Cookbook.

Lecturer at workshops for Family and Children Conferences for over 20 years.

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