



## A Tribute to Roy Swank, MD

### Founder of the Low-fat Dietary Treatment of Multiple Sclerosis

Dr. Roy Laver Swank (1909–2008), Neurologist and Professor Emeritus at the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) was a personal friend of mine, one of my most important mentors, and a precious colleague. We worked together for almost two decades. He ran two multiple sclerosis (MS)-dedicated programs with me at my live-in clinic at St. Helena Hospital in Napa Valley, California in the 1990s. Fortunately, I shot a [homemade movie](#) of some of our time together.

In September of 2002 Dr. Swank and I entered into a legal agreement allowing me, in his name, to make as many people as possible, who were suffering with multiple sclerosis, aware of the benefits of the low-fat diet for the treatment of this deadly disease. My obligation also included making this treatment available and accessible going forward. One way that I have done this is to offer free [resources on MS](#) and diet on Dr. McDougall's Health & Medical Center website. I also have written and continue to write articles that are published on the Internet, in newspapers, magazines, and medical journals, and I speak nationally through radio, TV, my webinars, videos, and YouTube.

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## Featured Recipes

Recipes this month are contributed by Emma Roche. Emma is a budget-and-health conscious cook who is certified in plant-based nutrition. Since starting [PlantPlate.com](#) in 2013, Emma has been working on recipes and articles to help show others that healthy eating can be both flavourful and affordable.

The following recipes are from Emma's recently released eBook, [Whole Food Plant Based on \\$5 a Day](#). The eBook is currently being used by Dr. Craig McDougall and his team at ZOOM+Prime, a primary health care facility established in 2015 as part of the ZOOM+ Health Insurance system.

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- BEETROOT HUMMUS VEGGIE WRAPS

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The Swank MS Foundation has given me permission to share their professional video, "Conversations with Roy L. Swank," with you. Please take the time to get to know one of the true medical geniuses of the twentieth century.



#### Making Treatment Accessible and Available

On Tuesday, January 16, 2008 I contacted Dr. Swank's former department of Neurology at Oregon Health & Science University with a proposal to carry out a study of the highest quality in order to demonstrate the value of the low-fat diet for people suffering with MS. OHSU was the obvious university to work with since Dr. Swank served as the leader of the Division of Neurology in the Department of Medicine for 23 years.

## My Proposal for a Diet MS Study

1. We (The McDougall Program) will provide the entire initial and follow-up education of the participants on the intervention side of the study. We will also provide the funding for this initial study.
2. You (OHSU) will gather, analyze, and report the results. You will be the first authors of any papers published. However, I expect that the methods reported in all papers will clearly describe the diet used and identify The McDougall Program in Santa Rosa, California. Roy Swank, MD will also be given proper credit for his pioneering work in all publications.

[The McDougall Research and Education Foundation](#) (a tax-free 501c3 entity) raised nearly three-quarters of a million dollars (with many generous contributions from you, our newsletter subscribers) to fund this pilot project. Enrollment began in July 2009 and the last subject completed the study in March 2013. Unfortunately, it took another three years to write the study and find a reputable journal to publish the results.

I am happy to announce that the study appears in the September 16, 2016 journal *Multiple Sclerosis and Related Disorders* (released early on the Internet). Through extra financial contributions made by OHSU, the article was immediately made "open access" so that anyone is able to view our entire effort without charge.

## My Proposal for a Diet MS Study



The research paper reported excellent adherence to the McDougall Diet with those following the program reducing their fat intake from 40% of calories to 15% of calories, and maintaining this reduction for a year. Body weight, total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and insulin levels were significantly reduced for one year compared to the control group. Fatigue is a very debilitating problem for people with MS. Those following the McDougall Diet experienced remarkable improvement in their energy levels.

Notably, 85% (22/26) of the diet group subjects were diet adherent during the 12-month study. Therefore, those who doubt the power of food in curing major diseases can no longer claim that "even though the diet improves patients' health, no one can follow it." The study subjects could and did. These findings are as good, or better, than those for adherence to [medications](#) used in treating MS.

Unfortunately, the study was unable to demonstrate important benefits such as brain MRI outcomes, number of MS relapses, or disability at 12 months. I believe a larger study with more participants over a longer period of time would demonstrate these benefits. Dr. Swank's [multiple observational studies](#) published in major medical journals, which included many of the 5,000 patients he cared for over 50 years, showed dramatic reductions in relapses and disability progression from dietary changes.

So, why were we unable to confirm Dr. Swank's positive relapse and disability findings? I believe the answer to this question lies in the fact that the diet group was far more ill with their disease than the control group. The diet group was more fatigued, had 4 times as many MS brain lesions, with 4 times more disease activity, and suffered from more disability than the control group. Thus, the randomization process (chance distribution to the control or diet group) resulted in a serious bias against demonstrating improvements from a healthier diet. (A much larger study, say of 600 rather than 60 people, would have avoided this problem.) Although these results were not reported as significant, the diet group had fewer relapses: 7 for 32 people, compared to 9 for 29 people in the control group. The fact that most people were on medications known to suppress the formation of new lesions and reduce relapses also made it difficult to show if a healthier diet made a difference between the groups for these two endpoints.

### **The Impact of Individual Patients Was Profound**

One of the principal investigators of the study, Dennis Bourdette, MD, current chair of the Department of Neurology at OHSU, told me that he could not remember a patient ever thanking him for prescribing one of the typical MS medications (such as Interferon Beta or Copaxone). However, he went on to tell me about patients who cried tears of joy and gratitude for the opportunity to learn about the low-fat diet for the treatment of their disease, and the dramatic improvements in their health. Reading the story of [Karen Cooper](#) or [Deb Tasic](#) will help you understand how much joy the physicians involved in this study experienced from caring for our study patients.

Supporters and critics of our work must agree that if they accept the study to be well executed and valid with the disappointments, then they must also accept the undeniable benefits we discovered and reported, including outstanding adherence, weight loss, cholesterol reduction, insulin level decreases, and fatigue relief. All maintained for a year, indicating permanent dietary changes and improvements.

### **Will We Repeat the Study?**

The amount of money spent to treat just one MS patient for 10 years is more than the \$700,000 we spent on this entire study. (The cost of a typical MS medication alone is \$75,000 annually for one patient.) Give me \$7 million and what we have learned from this project, and I bet OHSU and the McDougall Program could confirm all of Dr. Swank's findings and more.

One thing is for sure, and that is we have opened the eyes of patients, physicians, and researchers worldwide to the importance of diet in the prevention and treatment of multiple sclerosis. This study was made possible with a tremendous amount of effort from many dedicated people (and a tiny bit of money), with most of the credit going to our principal investigator at OHSU, Vijayshree Yadav, MD.



## Featured Recipes



Emma Roche is a budget-and-health conscious cook who is certified in plant-based nutrition. Since starting [PlantPlate.com](http://PlantPlate.com) in 2013, Emma has been working on recipes and articles to help show others that healthy eating can be both flavourful and affordable.

The following recipes are from Emma's latest eBook, [The Summer Edition](#) of *Whole Food Plant Based on \$5 a Day*. Designed as a companion to Emma's [first eBook](#), this edition features more than 30

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The following recipes are from Emma's latest eBook, [The Summer Edition](#) of *Whole Food Plant Based on \$5 a Day*. Designed as a companion to Emma's [first eBook](#), this edition features more than 30 brand new summer-friendly recipes, and a 28-day menu plan with:

- Comprehensive grocery lists
- Daily preparation instructions
- Money-saving tips for the supermarket
- Kitchen and cooking guides

All recipes featured in the eBook are 100% plant-based, and made without added oils.

If you're looking to save money *and* eat healthily this sunny season, then look no further! Emma's eBook is available to purchase here: <https://payhip.com/b/SPQF>



### FRUIT AND OAT BREAKFAST BARS

Servings: Makes 12 bars

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Too hot for your regular morning oats? Then give these breakfast bars a go! They're a great grab-and-go option for busy mornings, and can also be enjoyed as a snack or desert. If you're not a fan of raisins, substitute another variety of chopped dried fruits in their place. Dates, apples, and apricots all work well—just keep in mind that they are likely to cost a little more.

### INGREDIENTS

2/3 cup raisins

2 medium very ripe bananas, mashed

1/2 cup applesauce

4 tbsp. ground flax seed

1/2 cup soy or almond milk



2 tbsp. tahini  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
2 cups oats  
1 cup whole wheat flour  
1.5 tsp. baking powder

#### **METHOD**

1. Bring a jug of water to the boil. Place the raisins in a heatproof bowl or dish, cover with the boiling water, and set aside to soften.
2. Preheat the oven to 355°F / 180°C. Line a large square or rectangular baking dish (approx. 10 x 10 inches) with baking paper.
3. Mash the bananas in a large mixing bowl until smooth. Add the applesauce, flax seed, soy or almond milk, tahini, and cinnamon. Mix well. Drain the raisins, and shake to remove any excess liquid. Add them to the bowl, along with the oats, flour, and baking powder. Stir gently until *just* combined—you don't want to over-mix the batter as it may become dense and chewy when baked. The mixture should be fairly firm, but quite sticky.
4. Pour the batter into the prepared baking dish, and spread it out in an even layer using a spatula or the back of a spoon. Bake for 22-30 minutes until firm and golden (cooking time can vary depending on your oven).
5. Remove the slice from the oven, and allow it to cool for 10 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack. Once it has cooled completely, slice into 12 bars or squares. Transfer to an airtight container or zip lock bags to keep the slice from drying out.

#### **SWEETCORN GRIDDLE CAKES WITH FRESH SALSA**

**Servings:** 4

**Prep Time:** 25 minutes

**Cook Time:** 20 minutes

These savoury corn pancakes are really easy to whip up, and pair perfectly with this fresh and zesty summer salsa. They also make a fantastic weekend brunch! For a gluten-free option, replace the whole wheat flour with a gluten-free flour blend.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

##### **for the griddle cakes:**

1/2 cup soy or almond milk  
1 tsp. apple cider vinegar  
1 cup whole wheat flour  
1 cup fine cornmeal  
3 tsp. baking powder  
1.25 cups water  
1.5 cups corn kernels  
1/2 a medium onion, finely diced  
1/4 tsp. salt (optional)

##### **for the salsa:**



4 fresh Roma or truss tomatoes  
1/2 a medium onion, finely diced  
1 clove garlic, peeled and minced  
Handful chopped fresh coriander  
Juice of 1 lime  
2 tsp. hot sauce (optional)  
· Black pepper, to taste

## METHOD

1. Prepare the salsa. Combine all 'salsa' ingredients in a bowl, and mix well. Cover and refrigerate until serving time.
2. Prepare the griddle cakes. Combine the soy or almond milk and the apple cider vinegar in a small bowl. Stir to combine, and set aside. In a separate mixing bowl, combine the whole wheat flour, cornmeal, and baking powder, and stir to combine.
3. Add the water to the milk and vinegar mix, and whisk to combine. Add the wet ingredients to the dry. Mix lightly with a fork until just combined, making sure there are no dry ingredients stuck to the bottom of the bowl. Gently fold through the corn and diced onion.
4. Heat a non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. When the pan has reached temperature, drop large spoonfuls of the batter in, then press down lightly with the back of a spoon to shape them into cakes. They should be approximately 1/2 an inch (1cm) thick, for even cooking. Cook for 2-3 minutes, then flip and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Transfer cooked griddle cakes to a plate, and continue the cooking process until no batter remains. (You can reheat any cakes that have cooled down in a microwave, or keep them warm in the oven until serving time.)
5. Serve griddle cakes topped with salsa, and a green salad to accompany (if desired).

## BEETROOT HUMMUS VEGGIE WRAPS

**Servings:** Makes 12 wraps (2-3 per serve)

**Prep Time:** 20 minutes

**Cook Time:** 15 minutes

These gorgeous veggie wraps are the perfect light meal for a hot summer's day. You can prepare all the elements ahead of time, and then assemble the wraps as needed. If you're planning on taking these as a packed lunch for work or school, it's best to take the components in separate containers and assemble them right before eating. Whole wheat wraps or pita breads can be used in place of collard or cabbage leaves, if preferred.

If bulgur (also known as burghul, or cracked wheat) is unavailable where you live, you can substitute whole wheat couscous in its place. For a gluten-free option, use quinoa instead.

## INGREDIENTS

### for the beetroot hummus:

14 oz. cooked beets  
2.5 cups cooked chickpeas (or 2 x 15 oz. cans, drained and rinsed)  
Juice of 1 lemon  
2 cloves garlic



2 tbsp. tahini  
1 tsp. ground cumin  
Salt (optional) & black pepper, to taste

**for the rest:**

1.5 cups bulgur (dry measure)  
12 large collard or savoy cabbage leaves  
3 medium carrots, grated  
3 cups purple cabbage, very finely sliced  
1 lemon, cut into wedges

**METHOD**

1. Prepare the bulgur (or couscous or quinoa) according to packet instructions. While it cooks, make the beetroot hummus.
2. Drain and rinse the beets, then place them in the bowl of a food processor. Add the chickpeas, lemon juice, garlic, tahini and ground cumin. Blend until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then transfer to a container or covered bowl, and refrigerate until ready to serve.
3. Drain the cooked bulgur, and rinse it with cold running water. Shake well to remove as much excess liquid as possible. Set aside.
4. Trim the stalks off the collard or savoy leaves. Then, using a sharp knife or veggie peeler, trim down the thick part of the leaf's centre rib, so that it's as thin as the leaf itself.
5. Assemble wraps as needed. Spread 1/4 cup of the beetroot hummus out over one of the leaves. Top with 1/3 cup of cooked bulgur, then add some shredded carrot and cabbage. Squeeze a little extra lemon juice over the top, wrap up tight, and enjoy!