

Being Chronically Ill Does Not Mean Giving up Life's Joys



There comes a point with every type of situation in life (especially when you have a chronic illness) where unsolicited advice becomes more harmful than helpful. As I get older, I've learned to ask others if they would actually like to hear my opinion on their situation.

I was a certified nutritionist for two years in my spare time, specializing in fitness nutrition. I am educated and aware of how to feed my body to feel my best; that doesn't mean I'm going to eliminate the foods that don't necessarily make me feel tip-top all the time. I openly share my journey on social media, and I love the opportunities and connections that decision has brought me – however, it also comes with a price.

If I cook a 5-star meal, packed with veggies, chicken and a slamming great presentation, of course I'm going to share that on my social pages – I'm proud of myself! I pride myself in remaining authentically and totally open about who I am and how I navigate my life with MS; with that, I'm also going to share the fatty chocolate mug cake I made at 1 a.m. on a Friday night, too, because that's the reality. For me, there is nothing wrong with this – the way I eat does not make me feel flare-ey, and I have never had a relapse in the 5+ years I've had MS (knock on wood!). This only becomes a problem when my inbox overflows with messages from strangers on the internet:

“I thought you were supposed to be that ‘fit chick’ with MS?”

“You shouldn’t share these types of things; you’re spreading a negative message to the chronically ill community.”

“Have you heard of Dr. Wahls? That’s how you should be living your life.”

“Diet will cure MS and you’re doing it wrong.”

I could go on with the types of messages I receive in these situations, but none of us need that kind of negativity in our lives. At the end of the day, everyone is human, and everyone is just trying to get through life in the most joyful and fulfilling way they can. I will always put my health first, but at age 25, I’m not willing to turn down my aunt’s blueberry pie, reject a fun night out with my sister or drive my grocery bill through the roof because someone told me veganism will cure MS.

There is no cure for MS.

I am a full believer that diet and joyful movement will **help** on bad days, if even just for your mental health, but there is no cure (...yet).

So, the next time you see someone sharing their personal journey about ANYTHING, I implore you to just show your support. Spread the love and tell them that they’re doing life right just because they’re doing life the way **they** want to.

When we band together, nothing can stop us – especially not MS.