



Talking to Your Doctor about MS

You are the most important member of your health care team. Managing MS – whether you have just been diagnosed or have had it for a long time – can be overwhelming at times. Taking an active role in your treatment can help you feel more in control and more satisfied with your care. Coming to medical appointments prepared is an important way to participate in your care because you will be better able to make decisions about what treatments are best for you.

Five Steps for a Better Medical Visit

Make a list. Write down all the questions you want to ask during your appointment, starting with the ones that are most important to you.

Record your health history. Put together a record of your personal health history, including current conditions and symptoms, and all past surgeries and significant or long-term illnesses.

Know your meds. Gather all your medications in a bag to bring them the appointment or take pictures of the labels with your cell phone so you have a precise record of names and dosages.

Learn your family health history. Write down your family's health history, especially that of your parents, grandparents, and aunts and uncles.

Bring a witness. Ask a family member or friend to come with you who can help you remember and understand what the health care provider said. If no one can come along, bring along a voice recorder so you can listen again later. It's a good idea to ask for a written summary, too.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about MS

Diagnosis and Treatment

- What kind of MS do I have? What is the typical course for this kind of MS?
- Will I need more tests? What should I expect during these tests and how should I prepare?
- What are the different treatment options? What are the risks and benefits of each option?
- What are disease-modifying therapies and would any work for me? If so, how do I choose from among the different options?
- Why is the one you are recommending best for me?
- Will you recommend a different treatment if I have a relapse (flare up)?

Side Effects

- What complications of MS should I watch for?
- Can you spell out the name of the drug you are prescribing? Will it interact with other medicines or over-the-counter drugs or supplements that I take?
- What kinds of side effects should I expect?
- What should I do if they occur or my symptoms get worse?
- Who should I call if I have questions?

Clinical Trials

- Are there clinical studies going on that could potentially be beneficial to me?
- Why do you think this trial would benefit me?
- How would it differ from my current treatment?
- I read about a study that is recruiting patients who sound a lot like me. I would like to discuss whether this would be a good option for me. (Bring a printed description of the study.)

Daily Life and Support

- How will MS affect my daily life? Will I need to change my daily routine?
- Will I need to change the way I exercise or what I eat?
- If I need physical therapy or rehabilitation services, what do you provide and/or recommend?
- Where can I find help and advice for help with personal and business issues? Are there support services or groups for counseling, insurance, employment issues, and financial concerns?

Additional Resources

For more information and resources in English and Spanish, please visit our resource page **For People with MS** (www.acceleratedcure.org/people-ms).

For more information about finding the right MS treatment for you, download the MS Association of America's "**How to S.E.A.R.C.H.™ for the Right MS Therapy for You!**" (mymsaa.org/publications/search/)

MS Minority Research Engagement Partnership Network Members:

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