

## WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS)?

### Multiple Sclerosis Affects More Than 400,000 People in the U.S.

#### MS is More Common in People Who Live Farther Away From the Equator

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a progressive, potentially disabling disease of the central nervous system, where the immune system attacks the myelin sheath that covers nerve fibers. As a result of the damage, communication between the brain and the body is adversely affected. As the disease progresses, the nerves may deteriorate or become permanently damaged.

Although there is no known cure for MS, treatment options are available to help alleviate symptoms. Please read the following summary, which includes information on common symptoms and treatment of MS.

#### 01 | Signs & Symptoms

Symptoms can vary widely, based on the level of nerve damage as well as the location of the nerves affected. Although each patient is affected differently, common symptoms include:

- Numbness or weakness of the extremities, commonly on one side of the body
- Vision loss, most often in one eye at a time, which includes pain with eye movement
- Electric-shock sensations with neck movement, especially when bending the neck forward
- Tremor, unsteady gait or lack of coordination
- Slurred speech
- Problems with bowel or bladder function

#### 02 | Diagnosis

If you are experiencing any of the above-referenced symptoms, it is important to speak to your medical provider to determine the cause. In order to make a diagnosis of MS, the following determinations must be made:

- Evidence of damage in at least two separate areas of the central nervous system; and

- Evidence that the damage occurred at least one month apart; and
- No other cause for these results

#### 03 | Treatment

The objective for treatment is to help lessen MS attacks. Your medical provider may prescribe corticosteroids to reduce nerve inflammation and may recommend plasma exchange (plasmapheresis) if you have not responded well to steroid treatment or if your symptoms are severe. There are also medications available to help block the immune systems attack on myelin and to reduce the rate of relapses.

Physical therapy, moderate exercise and changes to diet have also proven beneficial to MS patients.

It is crucial to develop a close relationship with your medical provider, to follow your treatment plan and to have a support system in place. This will enable you to cope with MS with as little discomfort as possible.

For more information on living well with MS, please visit: <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Living-Well-With-MS>

*Did You Know?  
MS is 2 to 3 times more  
common in women than in men*

#### References

<http://www.webmd.com/multiple-sclerosis/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/multiple-sclerosis/diagnosis-treatment/treatment/txc-20131903>