

# TIPS

## for Coping with Multiple Sclerosis



Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease that affects more than two million people worldwide. MS also affects women in greater numbers than men. Although there is no cure for MS, following these tips may help ease the symptoms.

**Consider counseling.** Individual counseling can be a helpful option for coping with MS. By participating in counseling sessions, you may effectively express sensitive or private feelings that you have about your illness.

**Adjust your sex life accordingly.** Many people with MS report a decline in sexual desire. Changes in sexual function can arise from the neurologic and psychologic effects of MS. Speak with your partner about your sexual issues and MS.

**Avoid exposure to extreme temperatures.** Heat, high humidity, or extremely cold temperatures can cause MS symptoms to worsen. If you do experience extreme temperatures, the adverse effects of these temperatures will not result in permanent nerve damage and are temporary.

**Stay on top of bladder function.** Bladder dysfunction occurs in at least 80% of people with MS. Unchecked bladder issues may cause repeated bladder or urinary tract infections, as well as worsening of other MS symptoms.

**Seek assistance when necessary.** Assistive devices can help you manage your symptoms of MS. Such devices include neck braces, foot orthotics, canes, wheelchairs or scooters, lower-leg braces or ankle foot orthotics, and walkers.

**Pursue your family plans.** There is no evidence that MS impairs fertility or complicates pregnancy, but pregnancy while taking certain MS drugs is not advisable. Women who have MS and desire to raise a family usually can accomplish this with the help of their neurologist and obstetrician.

**Combat your weariness.** Several different types of fatigue occur in MS. A comprehensive evaluation may help pinpoint the factors that contribute to your fatigue and make it possible to develop an approach that best suits your needs.

**Take the initiative.** Remember that you are not your illness and having MS should not define who you are. You are the same person that you were prior to being diagnosed with MS. For your part, be proactive in your health, learn as much as you can about MS, and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

*This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at [info@neurologyreviews.com](mailto:info@neurologyreviews.com).*

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