

Glossary of Common MS Terms



These are common terms you are likely to encounter if you or someone you care for is living with MS.

Atrophy

Progressive degeneration or shrinkage of muscle or nerve tissue due to disease or lack of use.

Brain Fog

Problems with thinking, memory, and concentration. More than 50% of people with MS complain about the ability to concentrate, reason, remember, or think.

Central Nervous System (CNS)

The group of organs in your body includes the brain, optic nerves, and spinal cord.

Clinically Isolated Syndrome (CIS)

The first neurologic episode that lasts at least 24 hours that may represent the onset of MS.

Corticosteroids or Steroids

Prescription medication is used to treat relapses in relapsing-remitting MS.

Demyelination

Damage to the protective covering, myelin sheath, that surrounds nerve fibers in your CNS.

Disease-Modifying Therapies (DMTs)

Pharmaceutical medications are used to treat MS.

Drop Foot or Foot Drop

Muscle weakness in the ankle or disruption in the nerve pathway makes it difficult to lift the front of the foot making it difficult to walk.

Exacerbation

Also known as an attack, flare-up, or relapse.

It is the occurrence of new symptoms or the worsening of old symptoms.

Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS)

EDSS is a 10 point scale for the evaluation of disability also used to monitor changes in the level of disability over time.

Up to 4.5 - able to walk without any aid

6.0 - walking aids are needed

7.5 - unable to walk more than a few steps

8.0 - restricted to a wheelchair

8.5 - restricted to bed

9.5 - totally helpless

10 - death

Functional Medicine

A holistic approach that focuses on identifying and addressing the root cause of disease.

Human Leukocyte Antigen (HLA)-DRB1*15:01

This is the most strongly linked genetic factor for the risk of MS. Carriers of the HLA-DR gene are prone to develop health issues involving gluten, Lyme disease, or mold. It also makes detoxification very difficult.

Lesion or Plaque

Damage or scarring (sclerosis) in the CNS, caused by inflammation.

Lumbar Puncture or Spinal Tap

A procedure using a hollow needle on the lower back to collect cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) to help diagnose MS.



MS Wellness Route

🌿 A Natural Path To Better Health 🌿

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

A diagnostic procedure that produces images of the brain, spinal cord, or other areas of the body. This is the preferred method for a diagnosis of MS and to monitor the course of the disease.

Microbiome

A community of microorganisms (such as bacteria, fungi, and viruses) living in or on the human body. Studies linked specific strains of bacteria within the gut to inflammation in MS.

MS Hug

A common symptom of MS where it feels like there is a tight band around the chest or ribs.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

It is a chronic inflammatory neurological autoimmune disease of the central nervous system (CNS). It is the most common non-traumatic disabling disease to affect young adults.

Myelin

The protective coating surrounding nerve fibers.

Neurodegeneration

A type of disease in which cells of the central nervous system stop working or die. MS is considered a neurodegenerative disease along with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Neurologist

A physician who is specialized in diagnosing, managing, and treating disorders of the brain and nervous system.

Neuroplasticity

The brain's ability to adapt, change, and modify around the damage caused by MS.

Optic Neuritis

A condition in which the nerve that sends messages from the eye to the brain becomes inflamed. It is often the first symptom of MS.

Primary-Progressive MS (PPMS)

Worsening of neurologic functioning from the onset of diagnosis. Approximately 15 percent of people with MS are diagnosed with PPMS.

Relapsing-remitting MS (RRMS)

The most common type of MS. During remission, all symptoms may disappear.

Remyelination

The repair of damaged myelin.

Sclerosis

An abnormal hardening of body tissue. The term "multiple sclerosis" refers to the multiple areas of scar tissue also called lesions.

Secondary progressive MS (SPMS)

A progressive worsening of neurologic function over time. Some people with RRMS eventually transition to SPMS.

Spasticity

A symptom of MS that causes extreme muscle stiffness which can interfere with movement. It is usually caused by damage to nerve pathways within the brain or spinal cord that control muscle movement.

Vertigo

A sensation of feeling off-balanced, lightheaded, or the surrounding environment is spinning.