

Multiple Sclerosis Facts



Understanding Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

MS is traditionally considered an autoimmune disease that attacks the body's immune system. It's also been called a neurodegenerative disease. Which is a type of disease in which cells of the central nervous system stop working or die.

Symptoms of MS include numbness, tingling, weakness, fatigue, spasticity (stiffness), bladder issues, depression, and cognitive impairments (brain fog). More severe symptoms include walking difficulties, loss of vision, or paralysis.

At first, symptoms are mild and are often ignored. Over time symptoms become more severe but they can still come and go.

Cause of MS

The cause of MS is multifactorial and include genetic predisposition together with environmental factors such as exposure to infectious agents, vitamin deficiencies, and smoking.

Types of MS

Clinically Isolated Syndrome (CIS) - the first episode of neurological symptoms caused by inflammation and demyelination in the central nervous system. It must be experienced at least 24 hours to be CIS.

Relapsing-remitting MS (RRMS) - the most common type of MS. It is characterized by attacks of new neurologic symptoms with complete remission.

Secondary progressive MS (SPMS) - a secondary phase of RRMS. Most people who have RRMS will transition to SPMS. In SPMS there is a worsening of symptoms with no periods of remission.

Primary progressive MS (PPMS) - worsening neurologic function from the onset. It's hard to tell which type of MS a patient has when first diagnosed. However, patients with PPMS usually end up in a wheelchair within the first five years. About 15 percent of people with MS have PPMS.

Who Gets MS

Nearly 1 million people in the U.S. and 2.8 million people worldwide are living with MS. Most people are diagnosed with MS between the ages of 20 and 50. Two to three times more women have MS than men.

MS is more common in areas furthest from the equator and is most common amongst white people of European descent.

Multiple Sclerosis Management

There is no cure for MS but the majority of people with MS do not become severely disabled. By eating and living a clean lifestyle people with MS can lead a healthy and productive life.

MS is not considered a fatal disease.