

Natural Help 4...

Multiple Sclerosis



What is Multiple Sclerosis?

Multiple sclerosis or MS is a condition that affects the nerves in the brain, spinal cord and other parts of the central nervous system. The cause is thought to be due to an **abnormality in the functioning of the** immune system but the exact mechanism is still uncertain. It is a chronic, progressive disease, and as yet, there is no cure.

A fatty substance known as myelin surrounds our nerve fibers (axons), and acts as an insulator. Myelin helps these nerve fibers to transmit signals from the **central nervous system** to other parts of the body. When myelin is damaged, it can become inflamed, and the result is the formation of hardened scar tissue (sclerosis), or it can be 'removed' (demyelination).

The body's own immune cells attack the nervous system, and the spinal cord, brain and optic nerves are all affected – this causes the nerve impulses to slow down. Symptoms of multiple sclerosis vary because **different nerves are affected at different times**. People suffering from multiple sclerosis may experience episodes of vision loss, weakness in their muscles, numbness and pain.

Sometimes these attacks worsen (exacerbate), improve (remission), recur (relapse) or develop in other areas of the body. Attacks can last days, weeks or months, recurring or showing no symptoms at all. Multiple sclerosis tends to have a **slow and insidious onset** and can progress silently, without you even being aware that you may have the disease until the damage is quite severe and more obvious symptoms are noted.

Multiple sclerosis affects women more than men, particularly Caucasians. The disease typically begins between the ages 20 and 40, but it may also develop in children and the elderly. People with a family history of MS are more susceptible to developing this disease. MS is also more likely to occur in certain geographical areas such as the United States where over 400,000 people are affected, northern Europe, southern Australia and New Zealand.

People suffering from MS have to deal with many obstacles, as well as the uncertainty of the outcome of the disease. If symptoms are detected early, treatment can slow the progress of this disease. Although multiple sclerosis cannot be cured, there are **various treatments that can help to ease the symptoms**. There are also many techniques and lifestyle changes to help you manage this disease so that those with MS can lead a full and productive life.

Various Types of Multiple Sclerosis

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Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this ebook or on ANY website.

Relapsing-remitting MS: During certain periods, symptoms can worsen (exacerbations) with increased frequency, as well as be reduced (remission).

Secondary progressive MS: In its early stages, this type of MS is similar to relapsing-remitting MS with relapses and remissions. It eventually progresses to secondary progressive MS when loss of physical and cognitive functions occurs.

Primary progressive MS: There are hardly any relapses occurring in this type of MS, but over a period of years, there is loss of physical and cognitive functions.

Symptoms may include:

- **Vision abnormalities:** These may include blurred vision, double vision, and inflammation of the optic nerve (called optic neuritis), involuntary eye movement or eye pain
- **Muscle weakness:** There may be loss of muscle strength in the arms and legs which can result in paralysis
- **Paresthesia:** Loss or alteration in feeling or sensation, most noticeably in the limbs. This is often one of the earliest signs of MS
- **Bladder and bowel dysfunction:** People with [multiple sclerosis](#) often have problems with bladder and bowel control such as urgency to urinate, incontinence or constipation
- **Balance and coordination abnormalities:** [Multiple sclerosis](#) can result in poor balance, uncoordinated movements, tremors, speech problems, dizziness or vertigo
- **Cognitive dysfunction:** People with [multiple sclerosis](#) may have memory problems, trouble concentrating and reasoning.
- **Behavioral changes:** Many people experience mood swings, depression or feelings of hopelessness
- **Pain:** Various types of pain can occur during [multiple sclerosis](#) such as facial numbness, burning pain in the arms, legs or back and muscle pain
- **Sexual dysfunction:** [Multiple sclerosis](#) can also affect sexual activity such as erectile dysfunction, painful intercourse or a loss of sexual sensitivity
- **Fatigue:** Many people experience fatigue, they tire easily and there is a decrease in energy levels

Diagnosing Multiple Sclerosis

The [diagnosis of MS](#) is determined by the patient's medical history, physical and neurological examination. Other tests that will help to diagnose MS include:

- **Blood tests:** Blood tests are performed so that any other conditions relating to [multiple sclerosis](#) may be ruled out.
- **MRI:** Magnetic resonance imaging is done by means of a special machine that uses a magnetic field to create images of the brain and spinal cord. It is used to detect inflamed or decreased myelin and the accumulation of scar tissue in the brain.
- **Spinal tap –Lumbar Puncture:** A needle is inserted into the spinal column and a sample of the cerebrospinal fluid is analyzed. This procedure will be able to detect antibody levels in the CSF that may be indicative of [multiple sclerosis](#).
- **Evoked potential tests:** This test involves the generation of electric signals by the nervous system in response to stimuli. It evaluates sensory,



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

visual and auditory functions, and also how nerve impulses are conducted.

What Causes Multiple Sclerosis?

The exact [cause of multiple sclerosis](#) is not known, but a combination of factors is likely to contribute to this disease:

- **Hereditary:** Hereditary or genetic factors may play role in this disease. Someone who has a family member with [multiple sclerosis](#) stands a greater risk of developing this disease.
- **The immune system:** In [multiple sclerosis](#), inflammation occurs when the body's own immune system attacks the nervous system – the brain and spinal cord.
- **Geography and climate:** It has being suggested that [multiple sclerosis](#) affects people in areas located away from the equator such as North America, Europe and Australia.
- **Viruses:** Viral infections may be a possible [cause of multiple sclerosis](#) but this has not yet been conclusively proven.

Help for Multiple Sclerosis

[Multiple sclerosis](#) is a long term chronic disease, and as yet no cure has being discovered. However, there are various treatments to control symptoms to slow the disease and improve the quality of life. Treatments include:

- **Immunotherapy** is an immune modulating therapy that may help to slow down the disease or reduce the frequency of relapses
- **Steroids** can help to reduce the severity of attacks
- **Antidepressants** may be used to* improve behavioral symptoms such as depression and mood swings
- *Medications can be prescribed to reduce urinary problems, and to minimize muscle spasticity
- **Physical therapy** helps to strengthen muscles, improve balance and walking, and reduce pain and spasticity
- **Speech therapy** may help when speech becomes impaired
- **Occupational therapy** helps MS sufferers to cope with adaptations in their home and work.
- **Counseling** can relieve emotional stress, and help the individual to express feelings about the impact of MS on their lives and relationships. Psychological support is vital to maintain a positive outlook and prevent feelings of hopelessness

Natural Remedies

There are a number of complementary and alternative therapies that can help to minimize the [symptoms of multiple sclerosis](#). These include homeopathy, acupuncture, and massage.

Complementary treatments may be used together with conventional medicine or as an alternative. However, **home treatment of MS is not recommended**. Should you decide to explore alternatives to conventional medicine, consult a qualified homeopath that would be able to monitor your progress and ensure that you are receiving the correct treatment.

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Herbal remedies for MS would typically include ingredients that would address symptoms which are most troublesome for the individual.

Some commonly recommended herbs include *Avena sativa* (nerve tonic), *Lavendula angustifolia* and *Melissa officinalis* and *Passiflora incarnata* (stress and anxiety), St John's Wort (depression and nerve tonic), as well as various herbs for bladder problems, constipation and general inflammation. Biochemic tissue salts can be helpful as a safe anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic and to **relieve cramps, improve circulation** and support nervous system health.

It is important to make lifestyle changes such as eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and resting as much as possible in order to manage the [symptoms of multiple sclerosis](#).

Tips to Cope with MS

- It is very difficult to cope with [multiple sclerosis](#) but there are lifestyle changes and techniques that can help. These suggestions include:
- Eat a healthy diet from all the food groups but limit your salt, sugar and caffeine intake
- Rest as much as possible because your energy levels will often be depleted
- Exercise regularly but check with your doctor before beginning an exercise program
- Maintain your normal daily activities as much as possible
- void extreme temperatures because heat or high humidity can cause people with MS to experience a temporary worsening of symptoms.
- Use equipment such as wheelchairs, scooters, canes or crutches to move around more easily
- Keep a journal and write down your experiences, symptoms or feelings
- Try relaxation and deep breathing exercises to combat stress
- Make to-do lists and keep reminders of appointments or schedules that you can refer to in case you forget
- Join a MS support group
- Adapt your living area so that it is safe, easily accessible and aesthetically pleasing for you to function in
- Develop your spiritual self
- Maintain a positive attitude and change the way you think by accepting yourself and your disease
- Social interaction with family and friends helps to keep your mind healthy
- Develop new interests that will accommodate your physical abilities such as photography, creative writing or painting

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is not the only treatment option. Conventional western medicine, often called allopathic medicine, is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools and most pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine. Allopathic medicine is also sometimes called orthodox medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that, only a few decades ago,



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homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available – and freely used even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is ‘better’ than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that both have a role to play in the treatment program.

Natural medicine has often been frowned on by conventional doctors, especially by those who did not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the body has an innate capacity to heal itself. While natural medicines are often called ‘alternative’ or ‘complimentary’ medicines, they are, in fact, a unique and independent form of medicine in their own right, well able to treat a variety of conditions. Perhaps the term ‘holistic’ medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine, which encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to support health (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer and that, in many cases, holistic medicine can accomplish just as much, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing.

In many cases, they can succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a long history of usage and there is a wealth of empirical evidence to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines must be manufactured in the correct way, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards, often resulting in a flood of

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inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called 'standardized' extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While 'standardized' extracts may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have grave disadvantages. These include an increase in side effects as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, always choose wisely. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor in order that your condition may be monitored. Well informed and supportive practitioners will support patients who want to take responsibility for their own health.

Related Natural Remedies:

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And, because our tissue salts are naturally occurring in the body and manufactured to ensure safe, yet optimum potency, they are safe to use for all ages, as well as during pregnancy.

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