



Knowledge Brochure Series

MS & WELLNESS

Strive for your best body and mind

Wellness is about achieving a balance that helps you feel your best. By staying committed to making healthy choices, you can help take control of your MS.

Together with your healthcare team, you can develop a wellness plan that works for you.

Your wellness plan should include:

- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Exercising regularly
- Not smoking
- Keeping track of your mental and emotional well-being

Focus on overall wellness. Your mental health is just as important as your physical well-being.

Healthy eating

Eating well can help you feel better, stay healthy, and fight fatigue. Diet can impact your health in many ways, including your energy, mobility, MS symptoms, and bone health. Remember to keep your doctor informed of any dietary restrictions you may have or supplements you take.

Some healthy eating habits to incorporate into your daily life include:

- Eating more servings of fruit each day
- Increasing your vegetable intake
- Avoiding saturated fats (found in fatty meats, cheeses, and butter)
- Not skipping meals

MS specialists recommend the same low-fat, high-fiber diet for people with MS that is recommended for the general public.

Making healthy eating a habit

Contrary to what you might think, you can eat well and still enjoy every meal. Spice up your routine—and improve your diet—by:

- Substituting refined products, such as white bread or sugary cereals, with **whole grain products**, like whole-wheat breads or cereals
- Stocking up on **frozen vegetables** for quick and easy cooking in the microwave. Many vegetables also taste great with a low-fat dip or dressing for a simple, healthy snack
- Eating **fruit**. Sliced fruit makes a great snack, and fruits that are dried or frozen can easily be prepared for eating on the go
- Avoiding added sugars. Read food labels for hidden sugar and make alternative choices. You may be surprised to find sugar added to foods like yogurt, cereals, tomato sauce, salad dressings, and other condiments



The importance of exercise

Exercise is a great way to stay healthy and help manage your MS symptoms. Studies show that exercise can help people with MS improve:

- Cognitive function
- Cardiovascular fitness
- Strength
- Fatigue and depression
- Bladder and bowel function

Remember: Always consult your doctor before beginning an exercise regimen.

Exercise can be fun!

Be creative when it comes to finding an exercise routine that works for you. Consider some cardiovascular exercises, such as jogging, cycling, dancing, or walking. If traditional forms of exercise are not appealing to you, you may want to try a new activity, like yoga, aquatic exercise, or tai chi.

You can also incorporate informal exercise into your daily routine. Try taking the stairs instead of the elevator, doing stretches while you read or watch television, or taking a pet out for a walk. If you spend your day at a desk, take breaks to stretch and walk around the office. Stay committed to being active, and celebrate every victory.

Remember: Always consult your doctor before beginning an exercise regimen.

The dangers of smoking

It has been well established that smoking causes serious health problems, such as lung cancer, heart disease, and emphysema (a chronic respiratory disease that causes a decrease in lung function). Smoking also produces shortness of breath, susceptibility to lung infections, and heartbeat irregularities that can transform a mild or moderate neurological limitation in a person with MS into a severe disability.

As part of your disease management plan, maintaining your overall wellness should be a priority. Quitting smoking is one way you can proactively take charge of your overall health outside of your MS.

Smoking not only affects your health, but also the health of those around you. Secondhand smoke can cause adverse health effects in your friends and family.

Quit smoking

By quitting smoking, you are taking a positive step toward improving your overall wellness. You do not have to do it alone—reach out to your healthcare team and support network for resources to help you stay on track with your commitment to quit.

Some resources you may want to utilize include:

- Consulting with your doctor about strategies and therapies that may help you quit smoking
- Calling the National Institutes of Health at **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or visiting smokefree.gov

Smokers with MS may experience more severe symptoms, increased relapse frequency, and greater disability compared to nonsmokers.

Emotional wellness

Feeling good is not just physical. Your emotional state is a vital component of your overall well-being. Emotional difficulties have many causes, and can even be a side effect of the medications you may be taking. It is important to keep your doctor informed of any changes in your emotional state.

MS may increase your susceptibility to emotional and mental states, such as:

- Grief
- Depression
- Moodiness and irritability
- Anxiety

Because MS is a neurological condition, mood changes are considered both a symptom of MS and a reaction to it. If you experience any of these feelings, speak with your doctor immediately.

Feel your best

Though they may be difficult to identify and talk about, addressing mental and emotional difficulties are signs of strength and self-awareness that should be applauded. Do not be afraid to admit you are experiencing mental health issues. By being honest and forthcoming with yourself and your healthcare team, you can get the help you need. Remember:

- Getting help starts with recognizing that your emotional health is just as important as your physical health
- Report any and all changes in your mental state to your healthcare team
- Ask your doctor for referrals to mental health professionals who can help you
- Connect with others in person or online for support



Support is available



While there's no substitute for medical advice from your doctor, Teva **Shared Solutions**® Digital Services provides a variety of downloadable resources to help guide your MS journey.

The following websites provide additional MS-related information:

- National Multiple Sclerosis Society: www.nmss.org
- Multiple Sclerosis Association of America: www.mymsaa.org
- Caregiver Action Network: www.caregiveraction.org
- MS Connection: www.msconnection.org