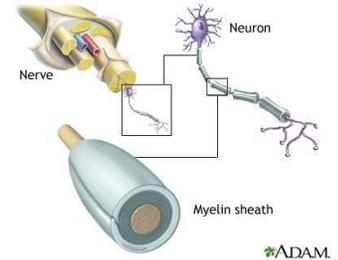


MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system, that is the brain and spinal cord (cord that connects the brain to the rest of the body). It injures the myelin sheath, material that surrounds and protects the nerve cells. The lesion blocks messages between the brain and the body, leading to symptoms of multiple sclerosis.



Types of Multiples Sclerosis

The types of multiple sclerosis that exist are:

Remission-relapse: This have quiet and active periods. Quiet periods are when the patient has very little or no symptoms of the disease (they are called remission). The remission can last for months or years. In the active periods when the patient presents the symptoms of the disease are called relapse.

Primary progressive: This is when the patient has a slow or constant worsening of symptoms since the first signs of the disease. There are no remissions periods in this type of multiple sclerosis.

Secondary progressive: This begins with very few or no symptoms. Then a constant worsening of the disease follows. Remission periods become less frequent.

Progressive relapses: It is when there is a constant worsening of the disease from the beginning or onset.



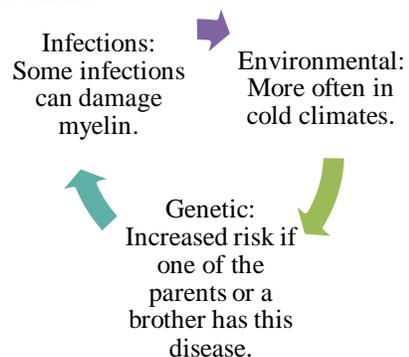
What are the Sign and Symptoms?

They will depend on the level where the central nervous system damage is found. They could vary from person to person and from time to time in the same person.

- Tiredness, muscle weakness and cramps
- Blurred or double vision
- Dizziness
- Numbness or tingling in the arms and feet
- Depression, mood swings or lack of emotion
- Difficulty controlling the bladder and intestines
- Sexual problems

Risk Factors

No one knows the cause of MS. It can be an autoimmune disease, which occurs when the body attacks itself. It is more common in women and young adults. There could be several factors that increase the risks:



How is Diagnosed?

Your health care provider will examine you and ask you about your medical history, your symptoms and when they started. The procedures are as follows:

- Blood test
- Lumbar puncture (the fluid surrounding the brain and spine is removed)
- Magnetic Resonance
- Nervous system function tests

What is the Treatment?

There is no cure for multiple sclerosis, however, there are treatments that can delay the disease. The goal of treatment is to stop the progress, control symptoms and help the person maintain a normal quality of life. These include:

- Drugs to control the symptoms and severity of attacks.
- A healthy lifestyle with good nutrition, rest and relaxation.
- Rehabilitation that includes: physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy and support groups.

What are the Complications?

If multiple sclerosis is not treated, the patient could suffer:

- Difficulty moving or walking
- Difficulty to swallow
- Paralysis, formation of ulcers or infections
- Blindness
- Depression

Remember

Multiple Sclerosis is a disease of the nervous system. The symptoms are: dizziness, muscle weakness, blurred or double vision. There is no cure, however, there are treatments to delay the disease.

Having multiple sclerosis can be a challenge. The stress caused by the disease can be managed by joining a support group. Sharing with others who have common experiences and problems can help you cope with the emotional and physical concerns about multiple sclerosis.

Contact your Primary Physician

If you are diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, you will be registered under the Vital Plan Special Coverage. Your primary physician and/or your specialist can provide information about the benefits of the Special Coverage, and how you will be registered under this coverage.

People with Special Coverage can get prescription drugs, tests and other services, without needing a referral or having their primary physician sign. The Vital Plan Special Coverage begins from the date of diagnosis and will be effective as long as the beneficiary is eligible for the Vital Plan.

In addition, you can contact your primary physician for more information or counseling on how you and your family can cope with physical and emotional concerns about multiple sclerosis.

Important

If you need physical or behavioral emergency services, you can dial 9-1-1, or go to any emergency room.

If you have any symptoms that you understand require immediate attention, before visiting an emergency room, you can contact the Medical Advice Line toll-free at 1-844-347-7801, twenty-four (24) hours a day, seven (7) Days of the week. TTY/TDD users should call 1-844-347-7804. By calling the Medical Advice Line before visiting an emergency room, you will be exempt from paying the copayment for services received during your visit to the emergency room.

For additional information

Customer Service Department
1-844-347-7800
TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7805

Visit our website
www.firstmedicalvital.com

Reference

<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000737.htm>