

Welcome to today's webinar:  
Overview of Common MS Symptoms

Your Presenter is Bridie Phillips  
Your Facilitator is Andrea Salmon

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**Acknowledgement**




We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians past and present on whose lands we meet today.

We acknowledge the deep feelings of attachment and the relationship of Aboriginal people to country and respect the cultural authority of the elders in each community.

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## Introduction to Presenter




Bridie Phillips is a Registered Nurse and has committed the last 14 years to community health. Bridie currently works for MS as a Nurse Advisor.

The MS Nurse Advisor service is available for clients, carers, family members and health professionals who may have queries about multiple sclerosis, symptoms, medications and general wellbeing.

If you would like to speak with an MS Nurse Advisor, contact MS Connect on 1800 042 138. MS Nurse Advisor appointments are available by phone, Skype and Facetime.

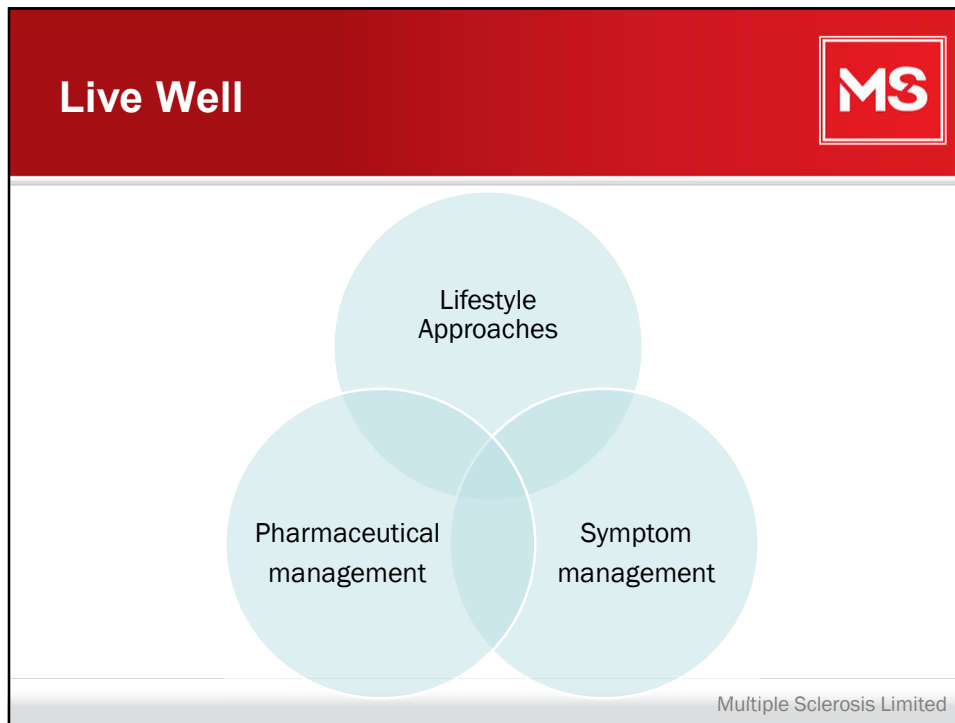
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## Overview of Common MS Symptoms

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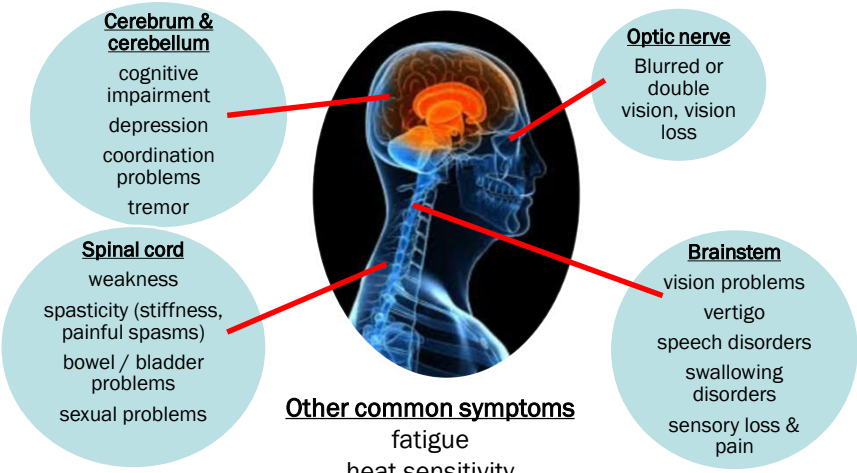



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- The slide has a red header with 'MS Symptoms- The Facts' on the left and the 'MS' logo on the right. The main content area is white and contains a numbered list of five points. The text 'Multiple Sclerosis Limited' is in the bottom right of the white content area.
1. Symptoms vary from person to person
  2. Symptoms can fluctuate and change
  3. Not everyone experiences every symptom
  4. Symptoms can be invisible: eg fatigue
  5. There is interplay between symptoms

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## MS symptoms



**Cerebrum & cerebellum**  
cognitive impairment  
depression  
coordination problems  
tremor

**Spinal cord**  
weakness  
spasticity (stiffness, painful spasms)  
bowel / bladder problems  
sexual problems

**Optic nerve**  
Blurred or double vision, vision loss

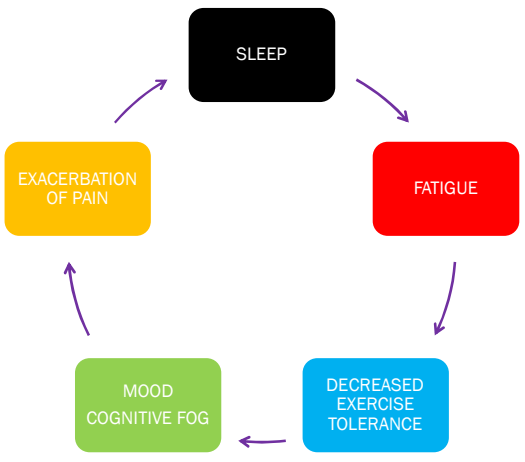

**Brainstem**  
vision problems  
vertigo  
speech disorders  
swallowing disorders  
sensory loss & pain

**Other common symptoms**  
fatigue  
heat sensitivity

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## Interplay of Symptoms




```
graph TD; SLEEP[SLEEP] --> EXACERBATION[EXACERBATION OF PAIN]; SLEEP --> FATIGUE[FATIGUE]; EXACERBATION --> MOOD[MOOD COGNITIVE FOG]; FATIGUE --> DECREASED[DECREASED EXERCISE TOLERANCE]; MOOD --> EXACERBATION; DECREASED --> MOOD;
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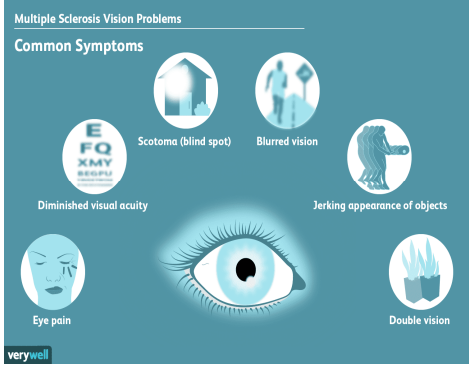
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## Visual Problems



- Usually transient
- Medical review if ongoing
- Neuro-ophthalmologist
- Referral to Vision Australia
- Consider the impact on driving



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## Physical symptoms




- Physiotherapy/Occupational therapy assessment
- Exercise
- Medical Management
- Aids, Equipment and Adaptations



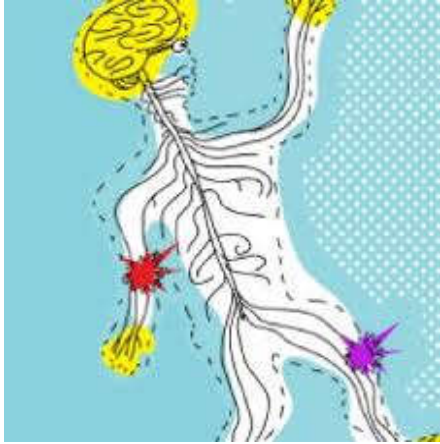
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## Pain and Sensory Changes




- Medical review
- Combination of treatments
- Investigate causes and effects
- Medication
- Lifestyle Strategies



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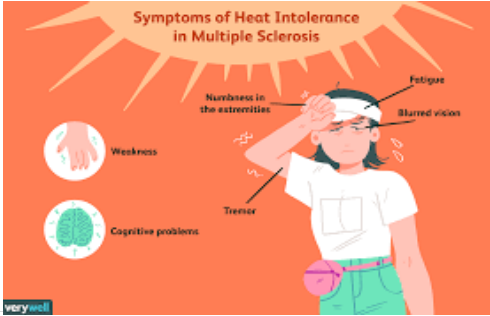
## Heat Sensitivity



Temperature or heat intolerance occurs in MS and can make symptoms temporarily worse.

Temperature or heat intolerance can be managed by :

- Planning activities around the heat,
- use of cooling products,
- fans and airconditioning



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## Fatigue



**“ Fatigue feels like being weighed down, as if you are trying to walk up to your neck in a deep, muddy river in heavy, wet clothes carrying shopping bags full of rocks ”**

#MyInvisibleMS



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## Fatigue




- Pace activities
- Allow rest breaks
- Maintain cooler environments
- Exercise
- Hydration
- General Health checks
- Improve sleep quality
- Seek advice


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## Sleep disturbances





- Routine – including daylight, exercise during the day and wind down activities in the evening
- Caffeine intake (coffee, tea, chocolate, cola)
- Manage Other symptoms eg Bladder
- Appropriate Referral



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## Cognitive Change




- Seek advice
- Neuropsychological assessment
- Occupational Therapy Assessment
- Develop strategies
  - Diary
  - Reminders

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## Continence Issues




- Seek advice
- Effective management is available
- Specialist health practitioner eg Continence Nurses and clinics
- Lifestyle changes
  - Exercise
  - Diet
  - Fluids




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## Changes in mood and emotions



- Dealing with a diagnosis of MS
- Mood changes
- Depression
- Seek support



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## Identifying a Relapse



A **relapse** is a relatively sudden episode of either new symptoms or a worsening of existing symptoms that continues for longer than 24 hours (i.e. not temporary) in the absence of a fever or other causes and is separated from a previous attack by at least 30 days.

A **pseudo-relapse** also referred to as a pseudo-exacerbation is usually a temporary symptom flare-up that has nothing to do with the course of your disease, but happens because something has aggravated your condition, like a fever, infection, or hot weather or during or after times of intense stress.

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## Managing Symptoms



**Prompt response** to change in symptoms or new symptoms that do not settle after 24 hours

**Seek advice** from GP/MS Clinic Nurse/MS patient support programmes/MS Nurse Advisor

**Notify** neurologist

**Present** to an emergency department if symptoms significant (a relapse might indicate a need for change of DMT or steroid therapy)

**“Do not be afraid to speak up”**

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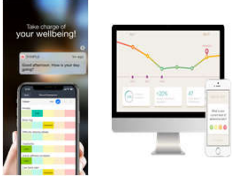
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## Tracking Symptoms

**Keep a symptom diary:**  
-when was new symptom experienced-what it is? Different to normal?  
-current medications: what's worked and what hasn't?

For example: Saturday 5 June  
"This week fuzziness in my leg has moved up to my arm. Had some pains in my hand also one day, but it has been mostly ok. It mostly feels like both arm and leg is slightly "weaker" and fuzzy compared to the left side. Must remember to mention to my MS Nurse on Tuesday."

Consider using **Symptom tracker Apps:**  
e.g.. Symple Symptom tracker  
or Flaredown



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## Where else can I get support?

GP: Chronic disease management plans to access allied health such as OT/SP/PT/Exercise physiology  
Mental Health Plan to access psychologists/mental health support

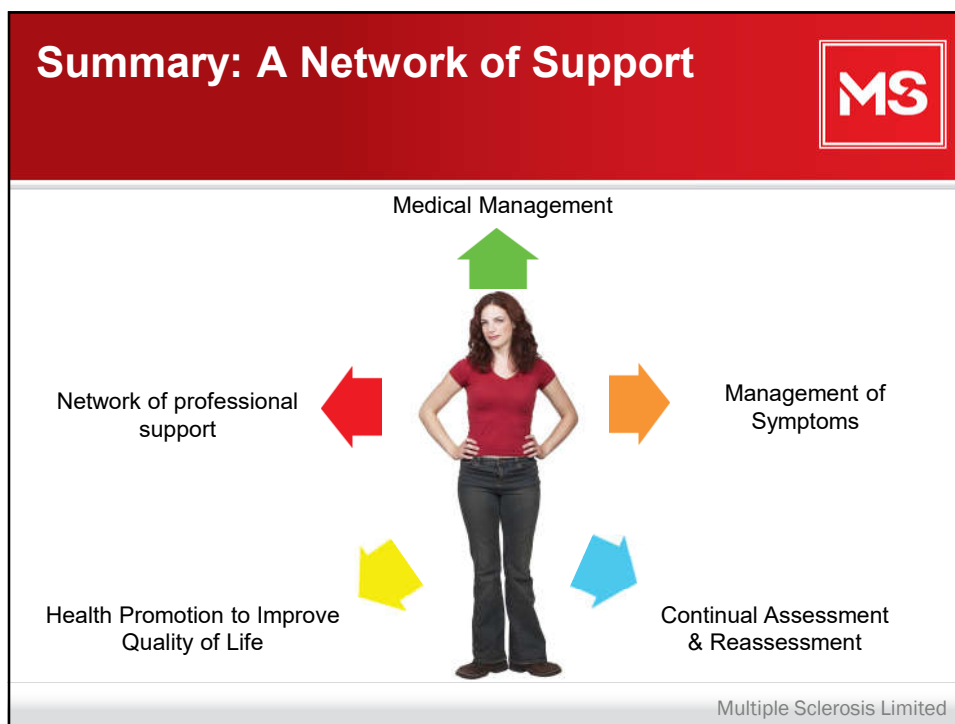
NDIS: National Disability Insurance Scheme (under 65)  
MAC: My Aged Care (over 65)

National Continence Help Line 1800 33 00 66 (8am-8pm)  
<https://www.continence.org.au/pages/national-continence-helpline.html>

MS Web page: Fact sheets on common symptoms  
<https://www.ms.org.au/what-is-multiple-sclerosis/symptoms/common-symptoms.aspx>

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### Questions

MS Connect  
1800 042 138  
[msconnect@ms.org.au](mailto:msconnect@ms.org.au)

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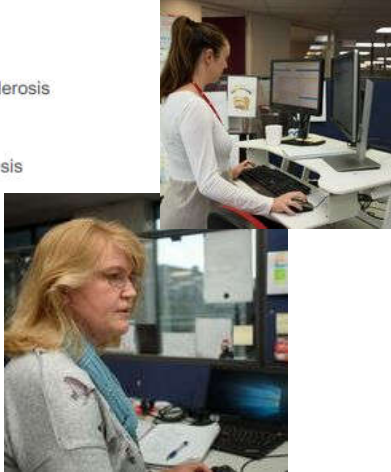
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## MS Connect



**10 reasons to call us:**


1. Up-to-date, evidence based information about multiple sclerosis
2. Expert advice on managing symptoms
3. Information about minimising the impact of multiple sclerosis
4. Support for people who are newly diagnosed
5. Information about treatment options
6. Education programs
7. Connections to other people living with multiple sclerosis
8. Referrals to appropriate services in your area
9. Extra support for you and your family
10. Respite options to give families short-term breaks




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## Peer Support



- ❖ 1:1 Phone Support
- ❖ Face to Face groups -  
(temporarily converted to Telegroups)
  - 2 in the ACT
  - 11 in Tasmania
  - 17 in NSW
  - 42 in Vic
- ❖ Telegroups
  - Currently running 12 telegroups
- ❖ Facebook groups
  - 3 groups – for people living with MS
  - for carers
  - for young carers – up to 25 years of age



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## Get Your Act Together

- Online Tool – designed to help you better manage your multiple sclerosis symptoms
- Focuses on some of the common symptoms of MS – emotions, fatigue, continence, cognition, pain and heat sensitivity
- Designed for people living in the ACT but includes useful information for all people living with MS
- Complete the tool to receive a personalized report (listing services, resources, tips etc)

Visit [www.ms.org.au](http://www.ms.org.au) and search **Get Your Act Together**

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## Employment Support Services

The MS Employment Support Service (ESS) is the only MS specialist employment service for people living with multiple sclerosis in Australia that can help you succeed at work, whether that is staying in your current job or finding new employment.

Contact MS Connect for more information on free call 1800 042 138.



The MS Employment Support Service (ESS) is the only MS specialist employment service for people living with multiple sclerosis in Australia that can help you succeed at work, whether that is staying in your current job or finding new employment.

Are you having issues maintaining employment due to multiple sclerosis? The MS Employment Support Service (ESS) is the only MS specialist employment service for people living with multiple sclerosis in Australia that can help you succeed at work, whether that is staying in your current job or finding new employment.

Who can help? The MS Employment Support Service (ESS) is the only MS specialist employment service for people living with multiple sclerosis in Australia that can help you succeed at work, whether that is staying in your current job or finding new employment.

MS Employment Support Service  
Take control of your working life

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## Registered NDIS Provider

MS is a registered NDIS provider in NSW, ACT, Vic and Tas and is approved to provide:  
*(Pls note: Face to face services/programs have been either converted to online programs or postponed)*

- Assistance with 'Access Request Forms', Access rejections and pre-planning
- Support Coordination – assistance to help make your plan active
- Plan Management
- Short term accommodation (Vic)
- Group activities – yoga, dance for health, exercise (NSW)
- Exercise Physiology (NSW)
- Specialist Continence Assessment (Vic)
- Occupational Therapy (NSW and Vic)
- Physiotherapy (NSW)

Want to learn more?  
Please call  
MS Connect  
1800 042 138

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## My Aged Care

**My Aged Care** is an Australian Government initiative, website and phone line to help you find about aged care services.

**Available to people who are 65 years of age and over.**

**Why Contact My Aged Care?**


- ✓ Information
- ✓ Assistance in mapping out your needs
- ✓ An assessment for further supports


**Phone:** 1800 200 422 Free call Australia wide

**Website:** <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au>

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**Podcasts for Clients** 




**PODCASTS**

<https://www.ms.org.au/support-services/education/podcasts.aspx>

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**Thank you** 

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[msconnect@ms.org.au](mailto:msconnect@ms.org.au)

Please stay on after this webinar to complete a  
short survey.

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