

Northern Health Regional MS Clinic

INTRODUCTION TO MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a health condition impacting the brain and spinal cord. In MS, your immune system; which normally protects you from sickness, causes damage to your brain and spinal cord. Treatments can prevent/ minimize damage or help you manage your symptoms.

What is a Relapse?

A majority of MS patients will experience relapses. A relapse is a period of at least 24 hours of new neurological symptoms or sudden worsening of prior symptoms that cannot be explained by other factors like heat, infections or stress.

Contact Nursing Staff if:

- You have questions about MS
- You are experiencing a relapse
- Your MS symptoms are not well managed
- You want to start/stop disease modifying therapy
- You have questions about other medications that were prescribed by your neurologist
- You are thinking of starting a family

Common Symptoms



Vision changes



Difficulty walking



Change in bladder function



Muscle weakness or spasm



Dizziness, changes in mood or cognition



Pain, numbness or tingling



Changes with balance



Speaking and eating changes



Shooting pain down your spine

IMPORTANCE OF EXERCISE

Why Exercise?

Exercising contributes to improved:

- Sleep
- Mood
- Respiratory function
- Bladder/bowel control
- Feeling of fatigue
- Cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength control, balance & flexibility
- Daily activity performance
- Weight management

How Much is Enough?

- 30 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity 2x week
- Strength training of major muscle groups twice a week
- 7-9 hours of sleep each night
- Less than 2 hours of recreational screen time per day
- Sedentary behaviour less than 8 hours per day

Resources to Help You Get Moving

MS Society Resources

- [MS Society Canada GetFitToolKit](#)
- [MS Trust Exercise Videos](#)
- [MS Society UK Simple Exercises](#)
- [National MS Society Stretching for MS](#)

Other

- [MS Gym](#)
- [NeuroSask](#)
- [Evergreen Health Yoga for MS](#)



MANAGEMENT OF FATIGUE

An Overview of MS Fatigue

Many individuals with MS experience fatigue, and most report fatigue as their worst symptom. Fatigue symptoms can be broadly categorized into:

COGNITIVE FATIGUE

- Thinking becomes more difficult as tasks progress
- Difficulty with sustained attention & concentration

PHYSICAL FATIGUE

- **Central (“lassitude”)**
Generalized, full body fatigue
- **Peripheral (“motor”)**
Specific to certain muscles

EMOTIONAL FATIGUE

- Frustration
- Decreased motivation
- Loss of pleasure
- Sleepiness

How Can You Manage Your Fatigue?

MAXIMIZING ENERGY

- Treat factors that increase fatigue:
 - Poor sleep
 - Stress
 - Low mood or anxiety
 - Lack of exercise/ de-conditioning
 - Suboptimal nutrition
 - Heat
- Do things you enjoy!



ENERGY CONSERVATION

- Rest (physical & cognitive)
- Reduce energy demands of activities
- Pace activities
 - Determine activity tolerance
 - Avoid multi-tasking
 - Balance activities based on demands
 - Avoid comparing to others

Resources for Self-Management

[BC Brain Wellness Program](#) | [Self-Management BC Health Coach](#) | [Aby MS Expert Series](#) | [My MS Toolkit](#)
[MS Canada Navigators](#) | [The MS Society of Canada Northern BC and Yukon Facebook Community](#) | [MS Society UK](#)

CONTACT THE NORTHERN HEALTH MS CLINIC

Clinic Appointments/Booking: 250.565.2304 | **Nursing:** 250.565.2842 | **E-mail:** msclinic@northerhealth.ca
Toll Free Number: 1-888-967-6774 | **Fax:** 250 565 2662

CLINIC HOURS OF OPERATION:

Monday to Friday | 0830 – 1630 PST
Closed Statutory Holidays



- Adapted by S. Gysbers, RN for use by Northern Health with permission from the Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health.
- A Practical Guide to Rehabilitation in Multiple Sclerosis: Second Edition (2019) www.cmeAIMS.org
- Fatigue and Multiple Sclerosis: Evidence-Based Management Strategies for Fatigue in Multiple Sclerosis (1998) Paralyzed Veterans of America pva.org/research-resources/publications/multiple-sclerosis/
- Recommendations on Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Multiple Sclerosis in Europe (2012); European Multiple Sclerosis Platform emp.org