



## DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Managing Multiple Sclerosis

Whether you are newly diagnosed with MS or have been living with MS for years, navigating this complex disease can feel challenging. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

## Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

<b>Myelin</b>	The fatty covering that insulates nerve fibers, helping them send signals to one another rapidly and effectively.
<b>Demyelination</b>	The process by which the myelin surrounding nerve fibers is damaged, so nerve signaling is impaired, leading to a variety of MS symptoms.
<b>Central Nervous System</b>	Consists of the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerve. Only myelin in the central nervous system is damaged in MS (not the peripheral nervous system, which are the nerves located outside of the brain and spinal cord).
<b>Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)</b>	An essential imaging test that uses magnetic fields and radio waves (not radiation) for both diagnosing and monitoring MS (tracking the course of a person's disease is especially important for making treatment decisions).
<b>Relapse</b>	The appearance of new neurological symptoms or a worsening of prior symptoms that lasts for at least 24 hours and is separated from the previous relapse by at least 30 days. Also referred to as an MS attack, exacerbation, or flare.
<b>Gadolinium-Enhancing Lesion</b>	An area of active inflammation, as seen on a brain or spinal cord MRI, which signals that the myelin sheath is being attacked by a person's immune system.
<b>Silent Lesion</b>	Areas or spots visualized on an MRI that represent MS-related demyelination but cause no symptoms to the patient.
<b>Disease-Modifying Medications</b>	These medications, while not curable, can decrease the number and severity of relapses and slow the overall progression of MS. There are currently fifteen medications approved for treating MS.
<b>Uhthoff Phenomenon</b>	The temporary worsening of one or more MS symptoms when the body's core temperature is increased, such as from a fever, exercise, or hot/humid weather.
<b>Paresthesia</b>	A common sensory symptom of MS that describes abnormal sensations like "pins and needles," numbness, tingling, burning, or itching.
<b>Spasticity</b>	A common "motor" or movement symptom of MS that describes muscle tightness, stiffness, and/or painful spasms.



