

Talking about treatments

Questions to ask my MS specialist



For people with relapsing MS

Things are changing

We're learning more about how multiple sclerosis (MS) affects people's bodies and the difference treatment can make. Drugs for relapsing types of MS are developing all the time. So next time you see your specialist you might have questions. This checklist can help you get answers.

No matter what type of MS you have, official guidelines now say you should have a review with an MS specialist at least **once a year**.

So what's new?

If you have relapsing MS we can see from MRI scans that it could be damaging your body even when you're not having a relapse. But starting treatment – a 'disease modifying therapy' (DMT) – gives you a chance to slow down this damage.

Studies show that if you have relapsing MS and start a DMT **soon after being diagnosed** you could be less likely to see your disability get worse or to have more relapses. Starting a DMT later than that can still have benefits but it won't get rid of any disability you already have. And unfortunately DMTs can't help people whose MS doesn't have relapses.

Who can I turn to for support?

- A local MS nurse (if there is one), especially if you need support taking a DMT
- Your GP
- The MS Society Helpline 0808 800 8000 Monday to Friday 9am-9pm Ask questions, get support and information or just talk about how treatment and DMTs make you feel. Or email helpline@mssociety.org.uk
- www.mssociety.org.uk/earlytreatment Here you'll find more about treatment, our new DMT booklet, factsheets about each drug and frequently asked questions. Our website also has support and information for you if you have progressive MS.
- <http://mstrust.org.uk/ms-decisions> This online tool from the MS Trust can help you learn about DMTs, weigh up your treatment options, get more from your discussions with your MS team and make the choice that works for you.

My question checklist

When you see your specialist it's easy to forget questions that were on your mind. So take this to your next appointment to help you talk through what you want from treatment and how to get it.

I want to ask this	quite a lot	not so much
"Which DMTs can I have for my type of MS?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"How much difference might a DMT make to my MS?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Why might some DMTs not be available to me?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"What are the side effects and risks of different drugs?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"How likely am I to get side effects? What help would I get?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"How do people take the various DMTs?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"What tests do I need before and during this treatment? Do they hurt?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Is it OK to be on treatment if I want to have a baby/become a dad?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"If I say no to a DMT now can I change my mind and have one later?"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other things I want to ask....

Things to take to my appointment

	Got this	Don't need
My list of questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Names and doses of medications I'm taking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information about DMTs I've seen and want to ask about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A friend/relative who can help me remember things or ask questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pen and paper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letters or documents about my diagnosis or past clinic visits (if I have any)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Happy with your treatment?

You and your specialist should decide your treatment together. If you're not happy with answers you get or treatment you're offered you have the right to a second opinion. You could ask your specialist to arrange for you to see someone else at the same hospital.

For more information go to www.nhs.uk and search "how to get a second opinion" (include the quote marks).

If you're having problems getting an MS drug check out our *Access to medicines* guides here:

www.mssociety.org.uk/treatmeright

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