

Multiple Sclerosis Facts

Let's have a look at some interesting facts about **Multiple Sclerosis**:

- The number of women diagnosed with MS is greater than men.
- The periods of relapse suffered by a patient will almost always be of different lengths and severity.
- MS relapses can be controlled to an extent with the help of medication.
- Multiple Sclerosis is mostly diagnosed in people between the age of 20 and 40, even though the actual diagnosis may take more time.
- As far as racial facts are concerned, white people are more likely to get MS as compared to other races.
- According to an estimate, 2,500,000 people in the world have Multiple Sclerosis.
- The disease is almost never diagnosed in a child below the age of 12 or in a person above the age of 55.
- The exact cause of Multiple Sclerosis is not known, though it is true that it affects the immune system and the central nervous system of the body directly.
- MS is basically caused due to damage done to the myelin sheath protecting the axons by the body's immune system.
- MS is unique for each person.

Multiple Sclerosis FAQs

- Q. What really is MS?
- Q. What are the symptoms of MS?
- Q. How many people in the world have MS?
- Q. What type of people get MS?
- Q. How do the symptoms of MS tend to appear?
- Q. What causes these symptoms of MS?
- Q. Can MS cause permanent paralysis?
- Q. Can I die from MS?
- Q. Can MS be cured?
- Q. Is the disease contagious?
- Q. Why is MS difficult to diagnose?
- Q. What types of medication can I use for MS?

To get answers to these and more questions about Multiple Sclerosis, visit our website at **www.smspp.org.pk** or join us on Facebook at **www.facebook.com/SMSPPakistan**



UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

A public service message aimed at creating awareness of Multiple Sclerosis from the

Society for Multiple Sclerosis Patients in Pakistan

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What is Multiple Sclerosis?

Multiple Sclerosis or MS is a serious neurological disorder which affects the central nervous system (CNS) of the body. It is a long-term chronic disease that attacks the brain, spinal cord, optic nerve etc.

MS is one of the most common neurological diseases affecting young adults and according to latest studies, the disease is twice as common among women as compared to men.

The name Multiple Sclerosis refers to multiple scars or lesions that are formed in the white matter of the brain and spinal cord because of the damaged myelin.

What causes MS?

MS is caused by nerve damage as a result of inflammation. This inflammation occurs when the body's own immune cells attack the nervous system.

It is unknown what exactly causes this to happen, but the most common thought is that a virus or gene effect, or both, could be the ones to blame. Environmental factors may also play a role.

People who have a family history of MS or live in a part of the world where MS is common are more likely to suffer from Multiple Sclerosis.

Types of Multiple Sclerosis

In general, multiple sclerosis follows one of four courses:

Relapsing-Remitting - This is the most common form of MS where a person suffers from unpredictable attacks and relapses. The disease does not advance during the remissions and symptoms may fade and then recur at random for several years.

Secondary Progressive - The next stage of MS is called secondary progressive when the disease keeps on worsening and the patient experiences shorter periods of remission and more frequent attacks.

Primary Progressive - Only 5-10% of MS patients are diagnosed with this type of MS, where the disease is progressive from the start.

Progressive-Relapsing - This is the least common type of MS where steady deterioration of nerve function begins when symptoms first appear. Such patients have a steadily declining neurological function and they also suffer from superimposed attacks.

MS Symptoms

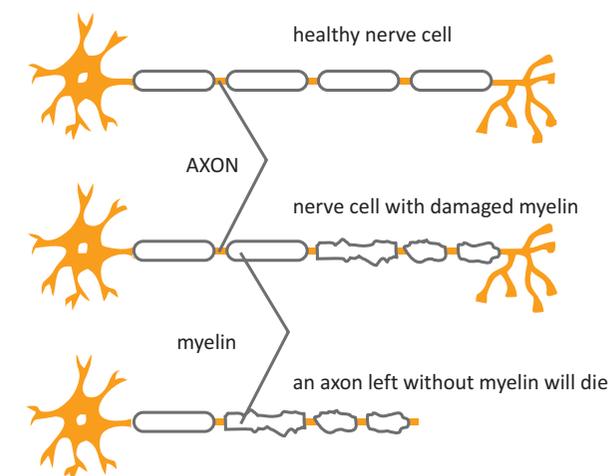
Some of the most common symptoms of MS include:

- Muscle weakness
- Loss of coordination and balance
- Difficulty walking
- Numbness
- Muscle spasticity and stiffness
- Speech problems
- Difficulty swallowing
- Loss of bowel and bladder control

What Happens in MS?

Multiple Sclerosis is thought to be an autoimmune condition where the body's immune system starts to attack cells within the central nervous system. T-cells manage to pass through the blood-brain barrier where they mistake the myelin sheath for a foreign body and start to destroy it.

This process of myelin destruction is called **demyelination**. The myelin strips away from the axon resulting in delayed or blocked messages along the demyelinated nerve.



Depending on the damage that happens, the nervous system control processes throughout the body are affected, leading to common MS symptoms. MS symptoms vary depending on the location and severity of each attack.