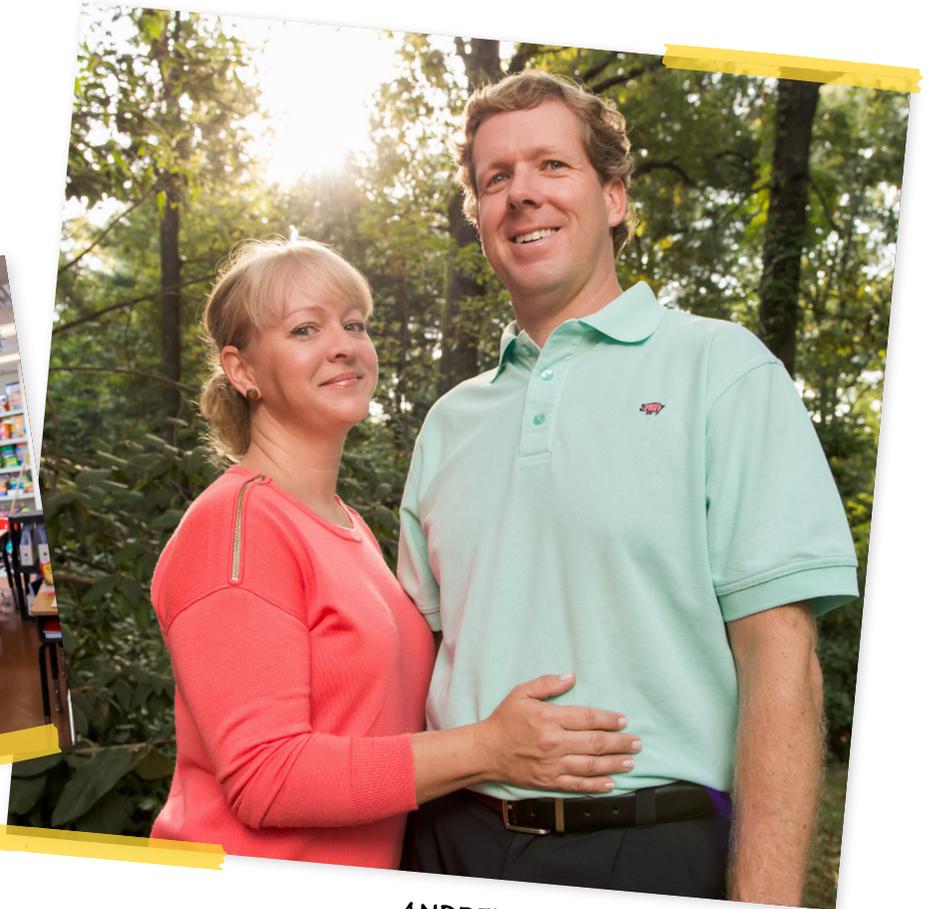




National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

ELLECIA, DIAGNOSED IN 2011



ANDREW (R), DIAGNOSED IN 2013

Now what?

Resources to keep you
moving forward with MS

nationalMSSociety.org

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DAVE, DIAGNOSED IN 1974



CRYSTAL, DIAGNOSED IN 2010

Introduction

A diagnosis of multiple sclerosis is life changing but that doesn't mean your life has to stop moving forward.

Everyone's journey with MS is different, but people living with it tend to have a few things in common, like legitimate concerns about staying healthy and independent. And a pretty deep focus on the long-term and how MS will impact family and loved ones.

Maybe your MS diagnosis is new — or maybe you've been living with MS for years, and a recent development has thrown you for a loop. Maybe someone you love is living with MS or has been recently diagnosed.

It can be challenging, but it's important to remember — with the right resources and support — you can live a better life with MS.

The National MS Society is in your corner. We've helped thousands of people living with MS and their loved ones power through the challenging moments that come with MS. That's why we created this guide.

Use it to find the Society resources that can help you face the obstacles MS throws your way. We compiled the most helpful tools and information on our website and made it easy for you to find exactly what you need to live your best life.

TIP

This guide is full of resources!
Look for [links in red](#) for helpful tips on our website.



HEATHER (C), DIAGNOSED IN 2009

Empower yourself with the right resources for living well with MS:

📖 Understand the symptoms ▶

Because no two people experience MS in exactly the same way. Learn how to identify and manage your symptoms.

📖 Find medical care ▶

Treating MS takes a team of medical professionals. Connect with healthcare providers and community resources.

📖 Live well ▶

Life with MS can present unique situations. Get information and resources to live your best life.

📖 Join the community ▶

Together, we're stronger. Discover what you can achieve with the National MS Society.

Don't forget...

1. You are not alone

There are nearly **one million people living with MS** in the United States. And when we include people whose lives have been touched by MS, like family members and friends, its impact grows exponentially. Keep this community in mind as you search for the resources and support you need to move forward. **We're in this together.**

2. You have come to the right place

When you reach out to the Society, you tap into a powerful network of people who understand what you're going through because helping people with MS is what we do. We know what it means to live with MS. From online resources to personalized support, the Society has the tools to keep you moving forward.

Understand the symptoms

No two people have exactly the same MS symptoms, and each person's MS can change or fluctuate over time. Knowing the symptoms is one of the keys to managing MS.

Explore the resources below to find more information about the symptoms you, or someone you care about, might experience.

[!\[\]\(bd1a142de767a21e5362c595f844a4ff_img.jpg\) Learn more about MS symptoms ▶](#)

Did you know?

Depression is a common, but often overlooked symptom of MS. It's a good idea to pay attention to your moods and check in with yourself on a regular basis.

Ask yourself: during the past two weeks,

- Have you felt down, depressed or hopeless?
- Have you had little interest or pleasure in doing things?

If you answered yes to either of those questions, it may be time to consider reaching out to your healthcare provider to learn more about support options that can help.

[!\[\]\(8bba887393ca45b761e5cb49e755e762_img.jpg\) Watch the video "From a Loved One's Perspective: Depression" ▶](#)



DAVID, DIAGNOSED IN 1998



ANGELA, DIAGNOSED IN 1992

How well do you know the most common symptoms of MS?

It may be true that everyone living with MS experiences different symptoms over their lifetime, but there is a range of symptoms that many people have in common. Familiarizing yourself with the common symptoms of MS can help you stay ahead of any curves the disease may throw your way.

🌐 [Learn how MS symptoms can change over time](#) ▶



Pain

Pain syndromes are common in MS. In one study, 55% of people with MS had “clinically significant pain” at some time, and almost half had chronic pain.



Fatigue

Occurs in about 80% of people, can significantly interfere with the ability to function at home and work, and may be the most prominent symptom in a person who otherwise has minimal activity limitations.



Cognitive changes

Refers to a range of high-level brain functions affected in more than 50% of people with MS, including the ability to process incoming information, learn and remember new information, organize and problem-solve, focus attention and accurately perceive the environment.

▶ [Watch the video “The Invisible Symptoms of MS, Part 1”](#) ▶

▶ [Watch the video “The Invisible Symptoms of MS, Part 2”](#) ▶

🌐 [Download the booklet “But You Look So Good!”](#) ▶

My MS just flared up. Now what?

Every person experiences MS differently. If you are experiencing an exacerbation (also known as a flare-up, attack or relapse). Be sure to talk to your healthcare team about options — your flare-up may not require treatment.

🌐 [Learn more about managing relapses](#) ▶

GALEN, DIAGNOSED IN 2011



BETH, DIAGNOSED IN 2009

Connect to comprehensive care

Managing your MS healthcare needs can sometimes feel like a full-time job. These resources can lighten the load by teaching you how to work with your healthcare team to reduce disease activity, manage symptoms and live your best life.

[**🌐 Learn more about medical care and MS**](#) ▶

Moving parts

Comprehensive care is essential to maximizing your health and well-being. It brings together experienced healthcare professionals representing a range of disciplines to partner with you in your journey. Each part contributes to the whole picture of your overall health.

Comprehensive MS care

- Modifying the disease course
- Treating exacerbations
- Managing symptoms
- Practicing wellness strategies
- Providing emotional support

[**🌐 Learn more about comprehensive MS care**](#) ▶

[**▶ Watch the video: “Comprehensive Care and MS”**](#) ▶



BROOKE, DIAGNOSED IN 2009

TIP

When it comes to managing your MS, it's a good idea to think of it as a team sport. Your entire healthcare team will be instrumental in helping you maintain your physical, mental and emotional well-being.

[**🌐 Download the webinar “Your Whole Health, Your Whole Team: Managing Your Complex MS Symptoms”**](#) ▶

Comprehensive care resources

Need a healthcare provider? The National MS Society can help you find one that specializes in treating MS, along with a host of other helpful resources.

Healthcare providers

Medical providers that specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of conditions and symptoms related to MS.

Emotional support

Licensed professionals and community based programs providing patient and caregiver support, family support and education.

Other resources include:

- Mobility and accessibility
- Home care and housing
- Independent living
- Medical and assistive equipment
- Legal resources
- Financial assistance

🌐 **Get connected to these health and community resources** ▶

Did you know?

There are a number of patient assistance programs available to help cover the cost of MS medication.

🌐 **Learn more about patient assistance programs** ▶

Live well

The life you want to live is within reach. These resources will show you how a healthy diet, regular physical activity and other wellness strategies can help you stay happy and healthy. Plus, including wellness activities into your lifestyle can have a positive impact on your MS.

[**🌐 Learn more about living well with MS ▶**](#)

The “MS diet”

There may not be a special “MS diet,” but what and how you eat can make a difference in your energy level, bladder and bowel function, and overall health.



MS specialists recommend that people with MS adhere to the same low-fat, high-fiber diet recommendations of the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society for the general population.

[**🌐 Learn more about diet and nutrition in MS ▶**](#)

[**🌐 Discover the latest findings about the impact of diet on MS ▶**](#)

[**▶ Watch the video “Diet and Nutrition in MS” ▶**](#)

Exercise a forward path with MS

Get moving! Not only is exercise and physical activity essential to your overall health and well-being, it can help manage many MS symptoms. Talk to your healthcare team about exercises that will work best for you.

8 key benefits of exercise for people living with MS



Better cardiovascular fitness



Improved strength



Better bladder and bowel function



Less fatigue



Less depression



Improved cognitive function



Increased bone density



Better flexibility

[**🌐 Learn more about staying active with MS**](#) ▶

[**▶ Watch the video “Exercise / Physical Activity with MS”**](#) ▶

Focusing on the positive and staying centered in the moment are just two ways people living with MS can boost their emotional well-being.

[**🌐 Discover more**](#) ▶

[**▶ Watch the video “Resilience – Addressing the Challenges of MS”**](#) ▶

MS just disrupted my life. Now what?

We'll be your compass

When MS touches your life, you might not know what to do next. But MS Navigators — highly skilled, compassionate professionals — can connect you to the information, resources and support needed to move your life forward.

MS Navigators provide:

- Information and education to help people with MS and their support teams powerfully advocate for what you need, when and how you need it
- Emotional support resources for people with MS as well as family and care partners, including support groups and ways to connect with others living with MS
- Help through the complexities of finding a healthcare provider, benefits, insurance and access to coverage, and employment
- Resources to face financial challenges and plan for the future
- Wellness strategies that can make an impact on your quality of life with MS, including diet, exercise, emotional well-being and connection to local wellness resources
- Assessment for personalized case management through the Edward M. Dowd Personal Advocate Program
- Crisis intervention in times of need



HANNAH, DIAGNOSED IN 2017

🌐 [Learn how MS Navigators can help you move forward](#) ▶

▶ [Watch the video "Patti's Story: The Impact of MS Navigators"](#) ▶



JOSHUA, DIAGNOSED IN 2015



MICHELLE, DIAGNOSED IN 2001

Knowledge is Power

If you have recently been diagnosed with MS or have a loved one who was recently diagnosed, you may not even know where to begin. Knowledge is Power is your introduction and guide to living with MS.

In this program you can learn about

- Taking the first steps
- Managing MS
- Working with your healthcare provider
- Balancing MS, family and relationships
- Insurance, employment and financial wellness

[!\[\]\(99af31d6d7b9b738106c66bf7ffde536_img.jpg\) Explore the Knowledge is Power program ▶](#)

Join the community

MS can feel isolating, but you are not alone. You're one of the nearly one million people currently living with MS. And when you join the Society, you become part of a powerful community of people who can help you live the life that you want with MS. But it's more than that. We're out to better the lives of every person affected by multiple sclerosis until we find a cure.

5 ways the Society can support you

1. MS Navigators ▶

These highly skilled and compassionate professionals can help you navigate the challenges of MS that are unique to your situation, whether you are a person with MS, a family member, or concerned about someone with MS.

2. MSconnection.org ▶

Join thousands of people supporting one another and exploring the issues that shape your world.

3. One on one peer connections ▶

Someone who has “been there” can provide tips, suggestions and emotional support to help you through the challenges that MS can throw at you.

4. Local support groups ▶

People come together in self-help groups to support each other through personal struggles and to offer the encouragement to live each day to its fullest potential.

5. The webinar series ▶

Learn how to live your best life in this ongoing webinar series that brings together two MS experts to discuss all things MS and answer your questions.

🌐 **Find out how the Society has helped real people move forward ▶**

▶ **Watch the video “We Believe” to learn more about this powerful movement ▶**

Ready to do more?

Join the movement

You and your loved ones can help us end MS forever by taking part in a variety of fundraising events like Walk MS, Bike MS and even do-it-yourself opportunities. Team up with your family and friends to work towards a world without MS.

[!\[\]\(aef305f57b9557b4e73b8de50f6d555d_img.jpg\) Find upcoming events in your area ▶](#)

Give the gift of your time

With your help, we can end MS in our lifetime. Join others making a difference in your community by donating your time and talent.

[!\[\]\(0230214116c86dbf511158ea2e1aae13_img.jpg\) Find volunteer opportunities in your area ▶](#)

Take action

Use your voice to make MS issues into national legislative priorities.

[!\[\]\(8706f9f9febc74216a91030d11f10ce7_img.jpg\) Become an advocate for change ▶](#)

Advance research

We want to end MS forever — and we need your help. There are a number of ways you can help us advance MS research.

[!\[\]\(b65ff707ec4d1ab514bcb3ba54feee42_img.jpg\) Become a research champion ▶](#)



Share research ideas



Give DNA for genetic studies



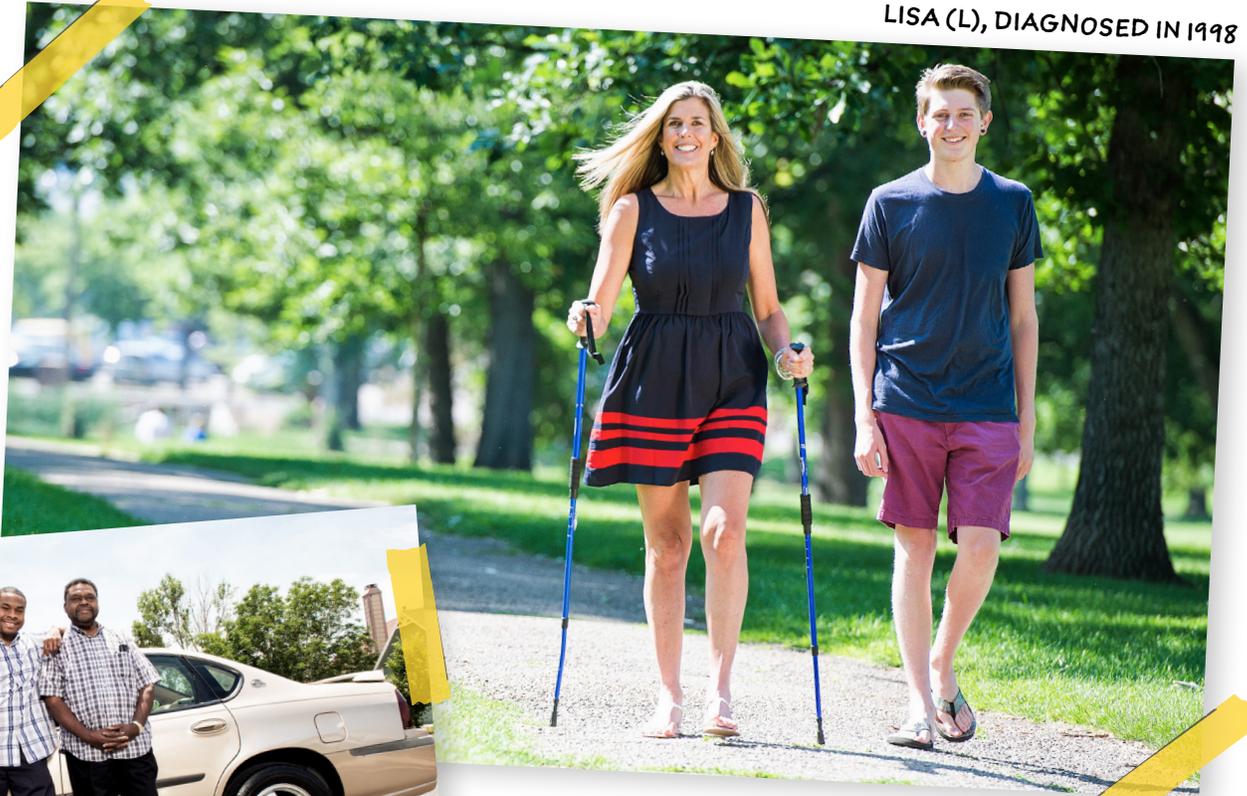
Advocate for progress and government funding



Participate in clinical trials

[!\[\]\(b9faa852dbc68871fc2d17d2e0489543_img.jpg\) Learn how to participate in research studies and clinical trials ▶](#)

LISA (L), DIAGNOSED IN 1998



WILLIAM (L), DIAGNOSED IN 2002

You just took a huge step forward in your journey with MS. And the National MS Society will be there with you at each step with the information, resources and support you need to live your best life. The journey can be challenging at times, but together, we can change the world for everyone affected by MS.

To learn more, visit [nationalMSSociety.org](https://www.nationalMSSociety.org).