

Contact Us Toll Free at 1.866.208.3430

## Adherence Do's & Don'ts

### Overview

Although multiple sclerosis (MS) is a disease without a cure, certain drugs can slow MS progression and improve quality of life. To help the medications work as efficiently as possible, patients must practice good adherence, which means using medications exactly as agreed upon with their doctor. Here are some Do's and Don'ts about using MS medications correctly.

### Do Start Treatment Early

Early treatment of multiple sclerosis with Avonex, Betaseron, Copaxone, Extavia, Gilenya or Rebif has many benefits. Early treatment has been proven to reduce the number of new brain lesions, reduce the number of MS attacks (also known as relapses), and likely reduce the activity of MS overall. To get the most benefit out of their therapy, it is important for MS patients to start treatment early and maintain good adherence.

### Don't Wait to Start Your MS Medication

MS medicines can be very intimidating at first. Here are some reasons why patients wait to start their medicines, and some information on why it is important to start treatment right away:

- Some patients do not have any MS symptoms at the start of therapy, so they don't think medicine is necessary. However, studies have shown that significant nerve damage can occur even when symptoms are not present.
- Most people dislike giving themselves shots. However, proper training and special devices can make giving injections more comfortable.
- Even with prescription insurance, MS medicines can be very costly. However, all MS medicines have a financial support program to make sure patients can afford to take their medicines.

### Don't Stop Taking Your MS Medications

MS medicines are intended to be used over long periods of time. However, many patients stop using their medicines without asking their doctor. Here are some common reasons for stopping MS medicines:

- Some patients say they don't feel any better, or that medicine side effects make them feel worse than MS does. Side effects usually go away or improve over time and most patients begin feeling better after a few months.
- People sometimes get MS attacks even though they take their injections correctly and wonder if a different treatment would work better. Unfortunately, no MS medicine can totally stop MS from progressing. Medicine only slows the disease down. Patients should tell their neurologist if they think their medicine is not working correctly, or if they are interested in other MS treatments. Also, it is very important that patients never stop taking their medicine without talking to their neurologist first!

**For questions or concerns regarding any of the above statements or recommendations, please feel free to contact Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy Toll Free at 1.866.208.3430.**