

Contact Us Toll Free at 1.866.208.3430

Pain

Education

Pain symptoms are very common in people with multiple sclerosis (MS), occurring in over half of patients. There are different types of pain based on how the pain presents itself and how long it lasts. Acute pain is usually sharp and quick. Chronic pain usually consists of constant generalized aches and pains. However, sharp acute pains that flare up consistently over time are also considered chronic pain.

Tips for Controlling Pain

- Participate in physical therapy and physician-recommended exercise, as these can increase circulation and promote pain relief.
- Get a gentle massage. Focus on the surrounding areas that are causing the most pain and discomfort.
- Ask your pharmacist or doctor if taking an over-the-counter pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin®), or naproxen (Aleve®) would be right for you.
- If the pain is within a muscle, try to limit activities that use that muscle to allow adequate healing.
- Pain above your comfort level is nothing that anyone should have to endure on a day to day basis. A diagnosis of MS does not mean a diagnosis of acute or chronic pain. Talk to your Patient Care Coordinator for more information on how to prevent and treat pain.

Medical Treatments for Pain

There are different treatments available depending on the type of pain experienced. Below are some common types of pain in MS and medical treatment options.

Acute pains:

- Trigeminal neuralgia—a stabbing pain in the face
- Lhermitte's sign—a brief electric-like shock from the back of the head down the spine
- Dysesthesias—neurologic (nerve) pains that cause burning and aching around the body

Chronic pains:

- Pain of spasticity—pains from muscle spasms or cramps
- Back and musculoskeletal pain—spasticity, or pains from extended pressure due to immobility and struggling with gait or walking

Neuropathic (nerve) pain may be treated with a group of medications called anticonvulsants, such as gabapentin. Spasms and musculoskeletal pain are treated with relaxers such as baclofen and tizanidine. Antidepressants such as amitriptyline or bupropion may even be used. You and your doctor can determine what is the most effective option for you based on your symptoms and type of pain experienced.

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.