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Thinking about your
treatment rights

If you have any further queries about disease-modifying therapies, there are some useful sources of information below:



www.msactivesource.co.uk
www.msdecisions.org.uk

www.msactivesource.ie

Multiple Sclerosis Society
www.mssociety.org.uk
Helpline: 0808 800 8000
(open Monday to Friday, 9am-9pm)

Multiple Sclerosis Trust
www.mstrust.org.uk
Tel: 01462 476700

For copies of official documents mentioned:
National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence
www.nice.org.uk
Tel: 020 7067 5800

Association of British Neurologists
www.abn.org.uk
Tel: 020 7405 4060

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Supporting you each step of the way



Questions you may have



What are disease-modifying therapies?

Disease-modifying therapies (DMTs) may not be a cure, but they can help slow the rate at which your MS progresses. Taken by injection either daily, on alternate days, or weekly, they will reduce both the number and severity of relapses you experience by about 30%.

When should I start treatment?

The Association of British Neurologists (ABN) has published recommendations governing who should be given DMTs and when they should start:

- You must have a relapsing form of MS. It is possible to be diagnosed after only one relapse, if an MRI scan has shown that more damage has occurred in your central nervous system since this first attack.
- You must be able to walk.
- Normally you'll be 18 years or older. If you're under 18 talk to your neurologist or MS nurse about your options.

These recommendations are backed-up in a guideline produced by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (known as NICE) – the organisation that sets the standards for the NHS. It says that if you meet the ABN criteria you can be given a DMT.

How do I get treatment?

As soon as MS is suspected, your GP will refer you to a neurologist who will be responsible for coordinating your MS related healthcare, including treatment. However, to get a prescription for DMTs you will need to visit a special MS prescribing centre. Your neurologist will refer you, and in turn you'll be seen by a specialist who will check if a DMT is likely to benefit you. There are over 75 of these centres in the UK, and either the MS Society or MS Trust can give you a list of their contact details.

What if I'm not prescribed a DMT?

If you think you meet the criteria for treatment, but you have not been prescribed a DMT, the first thing to do is talk to your MS nurse or neurologist. It can help to familiarise yourself with the ABN criteria and NICE guideline as these documents may help during your discussion with your neurologist or MS nurse. Details of where to get copies are at the end of this leaflet.

If you disagree with your healthcare teams decision, it may help to contact your hospital's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (known as PALS). They're there to help smooth out any problems you are experiencing with the NHS. Their number is available from your hospital switchboard.

Am I entitled to any other MS treatments?

Recently, an infusion therapy has become available for people with highly active relapsing remitting MS. Again it is not a cure, though it too reduces relapse rates and slows the progression of MS. You're entitled to this type of treatment if you've had two or more 'disabling relapses' in the last year.

Even if DMTs are not right for you, there are alternative treatments to help you manage your MS symptoms. That's why it is always best to discuss any problems you are having with your MS nurse or neurologist. They may well be able to help.