



CHANGING YOUR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS MEDICATION

During the course of multiple sclerosis, many people will change from one medication to another. This doesn't mean that your MS is especially severe or untreatable. MS is a highly individual disease, and there are many reasons for making a switch. Some people have difficulties with certain side effects. Other people are dissatisfied with their initial choice. And some may need a different medication to get their disease under control more quickly or effectively.

So the treatment plan for a person with MS is to start a medication, see how he/she does, and change treatments if a different one is needed. You've taken the first step(s), and now it's time to continue that journey. Fortunately, there are several medications available to treat MS – so you will be able to find the right medication for your particular circumstances.

BEFORE you start treatment:

- **Make sure you get the tests you need.** In some situations you will need a blood test, or other types of tests (such as an MRI), before you start the new medication. Your MS team will inform you of the tests that are required.
- **Talk to your MS team if you are planning a pregnancy.** It's best to be drug-free during pregnancy, so you and your MS team will need to schedule your treatments according to your pregnancy plans.

Tell your doctor if:

- **You have ever had chickenpox (or have been vaccinated for chickenpox)**
- **You have any infections, such as herpes (e.g. cold sores), or a respiratory infection (e.g. bronchitis, tuberculosis)**
- **You have any other medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, hypertension)**
- **Your MS team will tell you when to start your new medication.** In some cases, you'll need a treatment-free period between medications. This ensures that the effects of your previous medication don't create side effects or complications with your new medication.

What will the new medication do that the prior one didn't?

Your new medication will work somewhat differently from your prior medication. You will find that it's more effective or easier to take compared to your prior therapy.

But it's important to keep in mind that while your medication may have changed, the goals of treatment remain the same: to keep your MS under control; to limit the damage to your brain and spinal cord that MS causes; and to provide you with a medication you'll be able to take in the months and years ahead.