

# MS Essentials Tips



## MONITORING DRUG SAFETY AND MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Like all medications, the disease-modifying therapy (DMT) your doctor prescribed to control your multiple sclerosis can cause unwanted effects. Drug effects are potentially dangerous so it is very important to go to all your scheduled tests. Tests ensure that your body is responding well to the medication and you aren't developing any problems. Most problems can be treated if detected early with testing. Your doctor and MS nurse will provide you with a schedule of the tests you need.

Tests that may be required during your disease-modifying therapy		
Test/Procedure	What it involves	Why it is needed
<b>Blood work</b>	A small needle is used to take a sample of blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detects early liver damage</li><li>• Counts the number of cells (including immune cells such as white blood cells)</li><li>• Checks thyroid function</li><li>• Pregnancy testing</li><li>• Detects infections</li></ul>
<b>Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)</b>	You lie on a platform while a powerful magnet painlessly scans your brain and neck area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detects MS lesions</li><li>• Provides an indication of your response to treatment</li><li>• Can provide early detection of brain infections</li></ul>
<b>Eye exam</b>	An eye doctor tests your vision. This may include a 10-minute scan of your retina. If eye drops are used, your eyes may be sensitive to light for a few hours after the exam.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tests your vision</li><li>• Can detect fluid build-up in your retina (called macular edema)</li><li>• Can detect inflammation of the optic nerve</li></ul>
<b>Lumbar puncture ('spinal tap')</b>	A needle is inserted into your lower back and a small sample of fluid from around your spine is removed. Can cause headache and back pain. Brief bed rest may be needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helps to confirm an MS diagnosis</li><li>• Can identify infections in your brain or spinal cord</li></ul>
<b>Urinalysis</b>	You provide a small sample of urine (about 60 mL or 2 ounces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detects urinary tract infections</li><li>• Detects diabetes</li><li>• Detects kidney disorders</li><li>• Pregnancy testing</li></ul>
General health tests		
<b>Pap test</b>	A doctor obtains a sample of cells from the cervix. Can cause discomfort or pain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detects abnormalities in cervical cells for early detection of cervical cancer and HPV infection</li></ul>
<b>Skin check</b>	Visual exam of your skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assesses skin lesions (e.g. shingles)</li><li>• Checks skin and moles for early signs of cancer</li></ul>
<b>Mammogram</b>	X-ray of your breasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detects breast cancer</li></ul>

Tests will require a requisition or referral from your doctor. Keep these documents in a safe place. If you misplace a document, contact your MS clinic nurse or the drug company's patient support program.

Talk to your MS clinic nurse or patient support program if you are unsure where to get your tests done in your community.