



# MS Essential Tips

## Preparing for your telephone visit

Telephone visits from your healthcare team were a common procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic and will likely become part of your routine care. While in-person appointments are necessary for a complete evaluation of your MS, medical appointments by phone will enable your neurologist and MS nurse to monitor your health and address your needs between clinic visits.

### To make the most out of your telephone visit, it is important for you to:

- Schedule a period of time (usually 20-40 minutes) when you can focus all of your attention on the call away from distractions, background noise and interruptions.
- Prepare yourself for the call (see below).
- Be ready to answer the phone. Ask family members to leave the line free. Make sure your phone is charged, has good reception and the ringer is on. Please be patient – the doctor or nurse will do their best to call at the scheduled time but they may be delayed.
- Ensure the people you need are available. Family members or other caregivers are welcome to sit in on the call if you think that would be helpful.

## What to expect from a telephone visit



### Your neurologist or MS nurse may ask you about:

- General health, e.g. any new health issues since your last visit?
- Possible relapses since your last visit? Try to include as much detail as possible (when they occurred, how long did they last, what were the symptoms, any other environmental factors going on at the same time, etc.)
- MS symptoms since your last visit (e.g. any new or unusual symptoms, a change in severity). Try to provide as much detail as possible.
- Changes in daily function, e.g. walking or doing daily tasks is increasingly difficult. (Note: a full assessment of your neurological function can only be done in person.)
- MS medications: Have you been taking your medications as recommended by your doctor?
- Problems with your medication, such as side effects or any difficulties taking it.
- Coordinate care by other health professionals (e.g. obstetricians/gynecologists, dermatologists, pain specialists, psychiatrists/psychologists), as needed



### TIPS

#### 5 Tips to prepare for your telephone visit.

1. Communicate effectively. A telephone visit is as important as an in-person appointment, but it does not allow for visualization of your symptoms, “body language” and other non-verbal ways of communicating. So you will need to make a little extra effort to explain your symptoms or describe the problem you are having.
2. Write down the details about any symptoms you have been having. Your clinic may send you a questionnaire beforehand, or you can fill out the MSology questionnaire (<https://msology.ca/pre-visit-questionnaire>).
3. Prepare a list of questions you would like to ask your doctor or MS nurse. Jot down the key issue you would like them to address.
4. Keep a list of your medications along with your pharmacist contact information.
5. Remember to keep your eyeglasses handy.