



MS Essential Tips

When should I call my family doctor?

The healthcare team at your MS clinic or neurologist's office is there to help you manage the challenges of living with multiple sclerosis. But it is important to keep in mind that MS is only one part of your overall health, and the MS team is just one component of a larger network of health services in your community.

The central healthcare provider is your family physician (or nurse practitioner). The role of the family doctor is to provide continuity of care – managing your day-to-day health issues and coordinating care with other healthcare professionals (including the MS clinic).

Your family doctor will...

- Perform regular check-ups of your overall health (e.g. weight, blood pressure)
- Order procedures (e.g. X-rays) and blood tests (e.g. to check liver/kidney/thyroid function, cholesterol levels)
- Perform or schedule preventative tests (e.g. Pap smear, colonoscopy)
- Treat acute conditions (e.g. infections)
- Manage chronic conditions (e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure, depression/anxiety)
- Coordinate care by other health professionals (e.g. obstetricians/gynecologists, dermatologists, pain specialists, psychiatrists/psychologists), as needed



Coordinating your care

Your family doctor and MS clinic team collaborate to coordinate your care. They will also involve other key health care providers (e.g. your pharmacist) when necessary. Your family doctor is kept informed of treatments you receive from the MS clinic, and can help you manage some of your MS symptoms (e.g. pain, urinary tract infections) or MS treatment-related side effects. But when visiting your MS clinic, it is helpful to update the MS team on your current health situation and any medications you are taking.

Coordinating your care is especially important for women contemplating pregnancy. Your MS team will need to advise you about how/when to interrupt treatment so your MS is well-controlled before you become pregnant. Your family doctor and obstetrician/gynecologist will then provide support and counselling during your pregnancy.



TIP

Don't neglect your general health. Maintaining your wellness will help your body in its efforts to combat MS.