

How To Beat Your Bowel and Bladder Blues

CAN DO
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

WEBINAR 
WEDNESDAYS

THIS WEBINAR IS
SPONSORED BY:



JUNE PROGRAMS

Thursday, June 15

JUMPSTART

Gotta Go? Get Started With Practical
Bladder and Bowel Tips

Tuesday, June 20

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Bowel and Bladder

Wednesday, June 21

MS Moves

Thursday, June 22

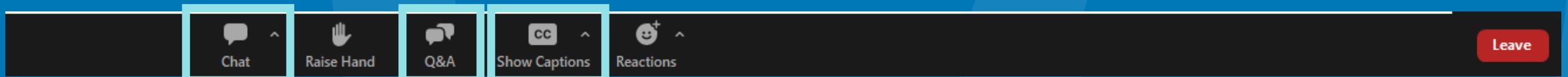
Black Community Meet-Up



CANDO-MS.ORG

How to Ask Questions

Type in your questions
using the Questions Box



Provide comments and engage
with the speakers and audience
using the **Chat Box**

NEW! Closed captioning

YOUR SPEAKERS



Stephanie Buxhoeveden
Nurse Practitioner

Glen Allen, VA



Roz Kalb
Psychologist

West Bath, Maine

LEARNING OBJECTIVES



- 1 Understand the ways MS can impact bladder and bowel functioning
- 2 Learn strategies for managing bladder and bowel function in everyday life
- 3 Learn ways to reduce the impact of bladder and bowel changes on your emotional and social well-being, and your relationships

INTERACTIVE POLL



**What
symptoms
are you
experiencing?**

**Bladder
Symptoms**

**Bowel
Symptoms**

Both

**Neither or
Unsure**

INTERACTIVE POLL



Which
healthcare
providers have
you talked to
about these
symptoms?

Primary Care
Provider

MS Provider

Nurse

Physical Therapist

Urologist or
Gastroenterologist

Other

No One

INTERACTIVE CHAT



IN THE CHAT



Please share **ONE WORD** that describes
the impact of bowel and bladder changes

First – Let's Get The Facts Straight

Let's Talk Bladder Facts



The goal of healthy bladder function is to go when and where it's convenient


Bladder symptoms are a very common MS symptom – and a first symptom for many people

Pregnancy, childbirth, normal aging, and menopause can all impact bladder function

- You may not know what is being caused by MS or other factors
- Reporting changes to your MS provider and/or primary care provider is the first step to finding the cause(s) and the solution(s)

Why Healthy Bladder Function Matters

Bladder Problems...

- Increase the risk for urinary tract infections – which can cause flares of other symptoms
 - Impact self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of personal dignity
 - Interfere with sleep, which increases fatigue
 - Interfere with productivity at home and work
 - Impact comfort and confidence during sexual activity
 - Keep some people homebound in order to avoid accidents
 - May cause people to drink less – which is unhealthy for your bladder and causes constipation
- 

Changes To Talk About With Your Provider

In MS you may have difficulty...

- Holding urine in your bladder until it's convenient to get to the bathroom
- Emptying your bladder when you get there
- Doing either comfortably

The challenge is that the symptoms may be the same:

- Feelings of *urgency*
- *Frequency* of urination during the day and at nighttime
- *Incontinence*, either dribbles or gushes
- Increased risk of *urinary tract infection*

A careful evaluation by a urologist is needed to sort out the problem

- The problem determines the treatment



Let's Talk Bowel Facts



“Normal” frequency varies from person-to-person

Bowel changes are common MS

- Sensory, motor, or both

Like bladder changes, they are also impacted by pregnancy, menopause, and normal aging

- Just because they're common is no reason to ignore them

Let's Talk Bowel Facts



The most common bowel change is constipation

- The inability to have a bowel movement for several days (< 3 BMs/week)
- Having dry, hard stool that is difficult and/or painful to pass

Bowel incontinence

- Most common cause is constipation. Bowel leakage can occur when loose stool leaks around dry, hardened stool.
- Loss of bowel control can occur because of nerve fiber damage

Common Causes of Constipation in MS

The infographic features a central illustration of a woman sitting on a toilet, looking thoughtful with her hands on her chin and three dots above her head. She is wearing a grey t-shirt and brown pants. Surrounding her are four circular icons, each with a corresponding label below it:

- Limited Physical Activity:** Represented by a wheelchair icon.
- Medication Side Effects:** Represented by two pill bottles labeled "ANTI-DEPRESSANTS" and "PAINKILLERS".
- Neurological Damage:** Represented by a neuron icon.
- Not Drinking Enough Water:** Represented by a glass of water icon.

Why Healthy Bowel Function Matters

As with bladder problems, feeling out of control of your bowel function impacts your self-esteem, sense of dignity and confidence

Constipation has an impact on other functions

- Creates significant discomfort and interferes with daily activities
- Affects your appetite
- Increases spasticity (also worsened with IBS)
- Impacts bladder function



Changes To Talk About With Your Provider

- Changes in your stool or the frequency of your bowel movements
- Bowel accidents
- Increase in stiffness, particularly in your legs
- Any ways in which changes in bowel function are impacting your daily life



INTERACTIVE POLL



Which activities have been impacted by bladder or bowel symptoms?

Work

Recreation Activities

Travel

Sexual Intimacy

All Of The Above

Other
(Put in chat)

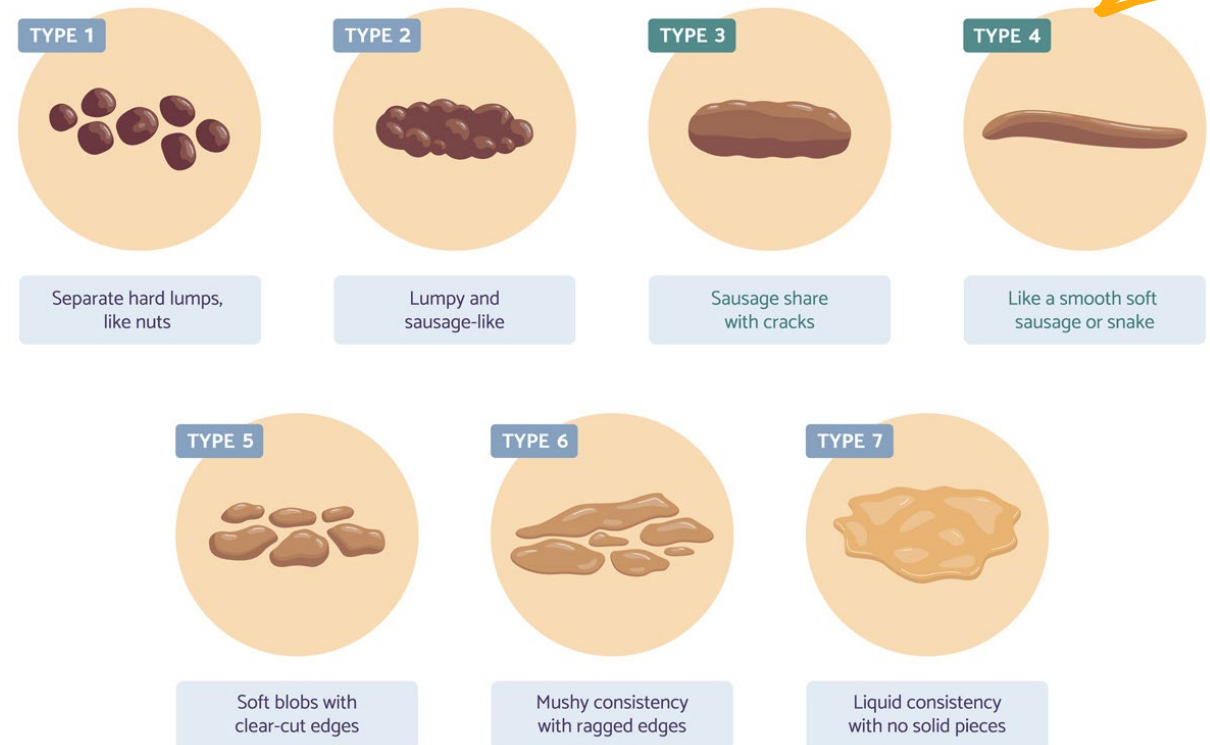
Now – Let's Talk About Solutions

Goals for Bladder and Bowel Function

- Predictable and convenient voiding routine
- Prevent/minimize episodes of constipation and incontinence
- Become confident in assessing your symptoms and ability to intervene when needed



BRISTOL STOOL CHART



Tips for Bowel and Bladder Management

- Include plenty of fiber, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats in your diet (20-30 grams/day)
- Drink adequate amounts of water (48-64 oz/day)
 - *Remember: restricting fluids is unhealthy for your bladder and bowel*
 - *Tracking water intake can be difficult, aim for light straw-colored urine*
- Engage in regular physical activity and exercise



Tips for Bowel and Bladder Management

- **Reduce consumption of foods that irritate the bladder:**
 - Sugar and artificial sweeteners
 - Caffeine intake
 - Spicy foods and citrus fruits
- **Schedule regular times to relax and allow body to void – stress increases problem in both bladder and bowel**
- **Track your food and hydration in a diary to guide your management strategies**



Bowel Management Tips

Set yourself up for success

- Have a warm beverage and/or meal and use gentle abdominal massage to stimulate peristalsis
- Sit on the couch with your knees above your hips for ~ 15–30 minutes to relax the puborectalis muscle and move stool to rectum
- Breathe into your belly to relax your pelvic floor and stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system

Avoid straining; belly breathe instead

- Can cause hemorrhoids/tears and can weaken your pelvic floor leading to worse bladder symptoms
- If nothing happens within 10 minutes get up and try again when you have the urge

Bowel Management Tips:

Positioning

A toilet stool can be beneficial

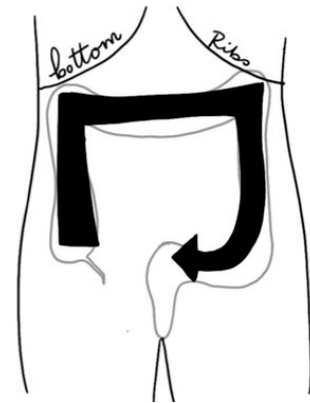
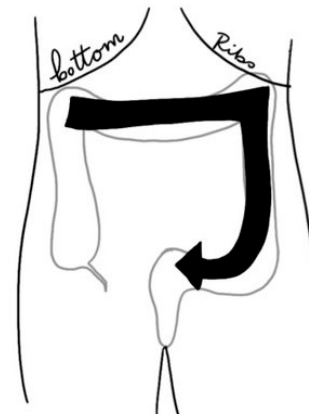
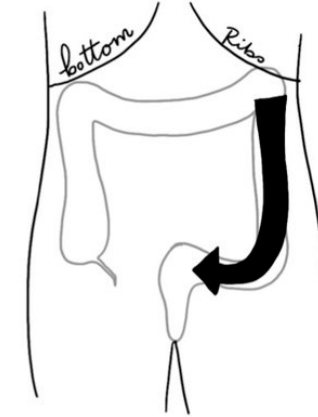
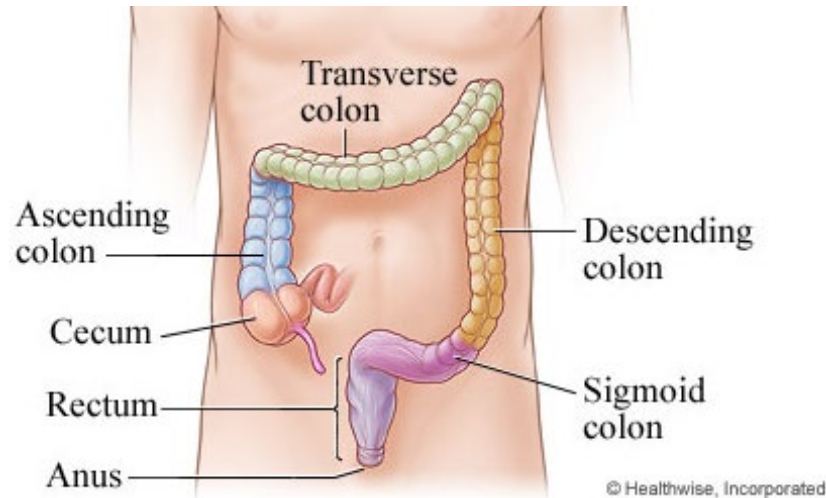
- Puts your body into a more natural squatting position
- Repositions your colon
- Reduces strain



Squatty Potty

Bowel Management Tips: Abdominal Massage

- Helps with pain, bloating, and constipation.
- 4 movements, 10x each
- Massage gently



Medications for Bowel Symptoms

Over the counter treatments

- Include oral medications, suppositories and enemas
- Timing is important, oral medications generally take longer (6-12 hours) vs a suppository or enema for more immediate relief
- Stimulants:
 - Sennosides (Senokot, ExLax),
 - Bisacodyl (Dulcolax),
 - Magnesium (Milk of Magnesia),
 - Polyethylene Glycol (Miralax)
- Softeners:
 - Docusate sodium (colace)
- Side effects: cramping, bloating, abdominal pain, unpredictable BM timing

If OTC medications are ineffective there are other prescription treatments



Bladder Management Tips

Emptying the bladder

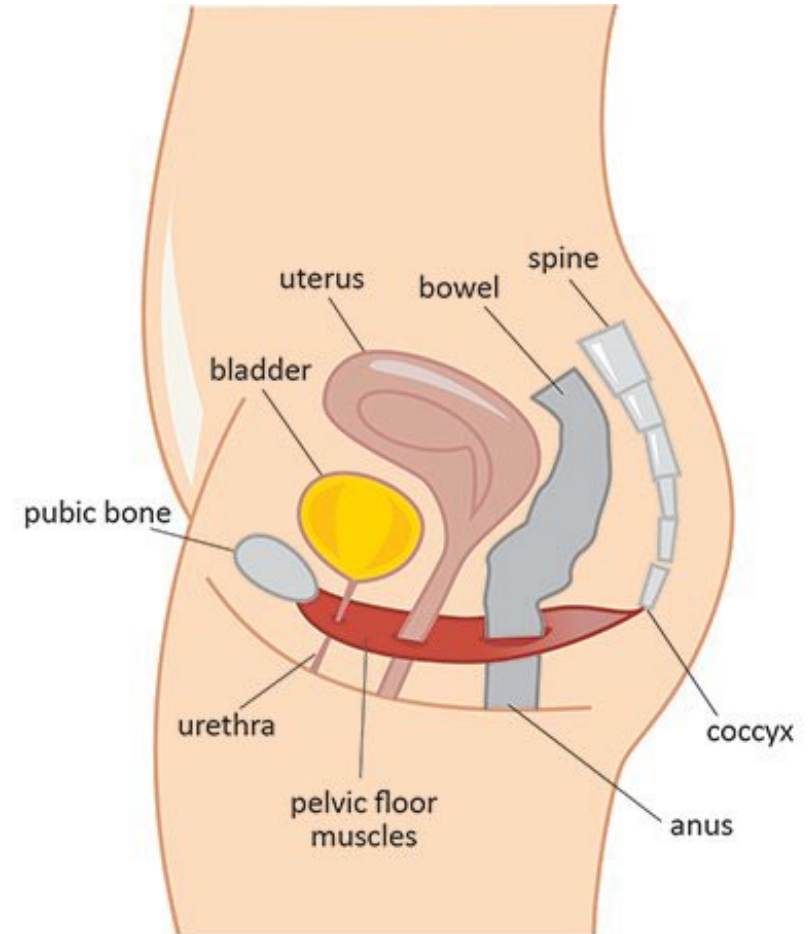
- Timed voiding to train your bladder
- Double voiding – urinate, stand if you're able, sit back down and try again
- Intermittent self-catheterization (ISC) is like physical therapy for your bladder
 - When medications are not effective
 - Easy, safe, convenient
 - Gives you the freedom to be out and about
 - Increases your confidence that your bladder function is now under your control



Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy

Can help with bladder and bowel function, as well as sexual function

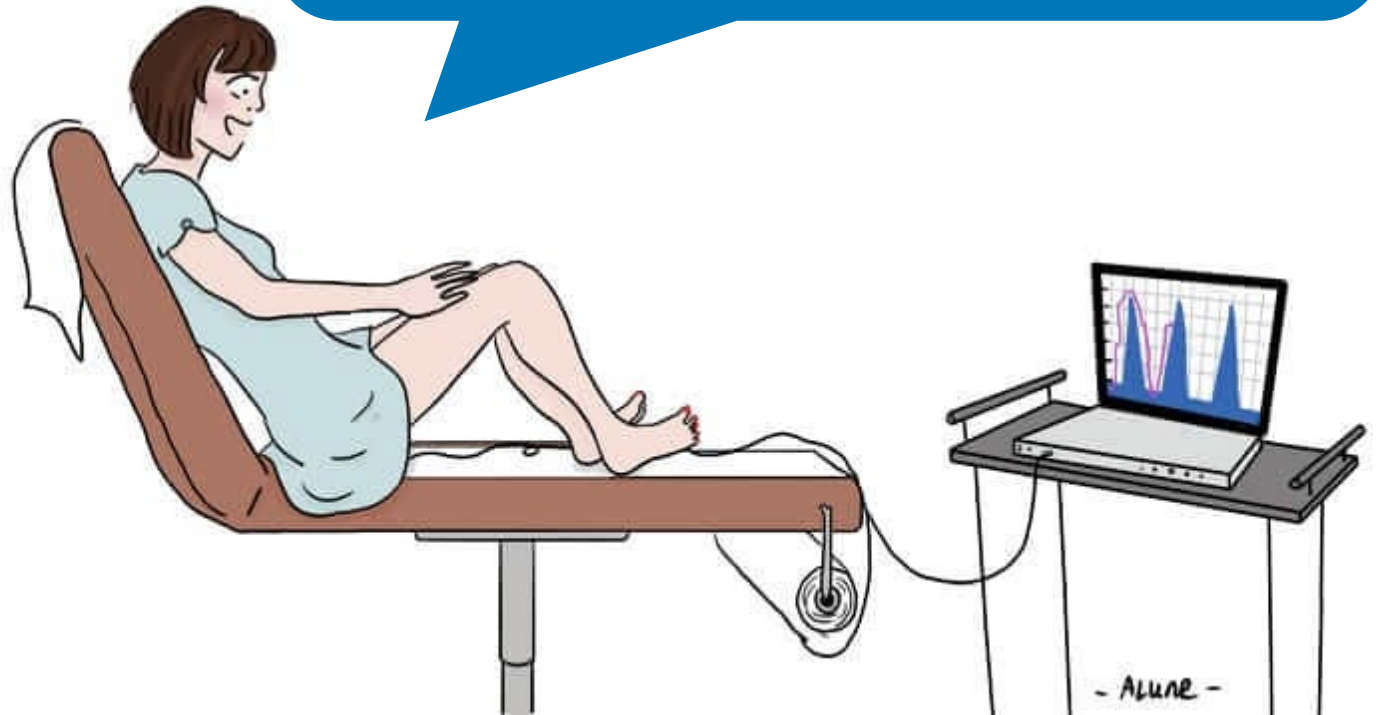
Offered by physical therapists who specialize in this type of treatment



Pelvic floor PT uses biofeedback to help you and therapist assess your bladder wall and track improvement as you exercise your pelvic floor

**Well that's funny,
I can see my contractions!**

**When I squeeze my pelvic floor,
I see it on the screen!**



Treatment for overactive bladder

- Difficulty storing urine
 - Oral medications for overactive bladder

Anticholinergic Medications

Oxybutynin - oxybutynin
Detrol (LA) – tolterodine
VESicare – solifenacin
Sanctura – trospium
Enablex – darifenacin
Toviaz - fesoterodine

Beta-3 agonists*

Myrbetriq – mirabegron
Vibergron

*Do not impact cognition

- Botulinum toxin (Botox) injections into the bladder wall
- Timed voiding to help train your bladder



Exercise Helps Both Bowel and Bladder Function

- Staying as active as you can – movement helps!
- Kegel exercises
- Core stabilization
- Cardio
- General strengthening



Tips for Avoiding Isolation

- Follow guidelines we discussed here today
 - Speak up about what accommodations you need
 - “I love summer picnics, but could we go to XX park instead? They have handicap accessible facilities which would let me more fully enjoy our time together.”
 - “I’m having a bad MS day but have been looking forward to seeing you all week. Why don’t we order takeout and watch a movie at my place instead?”
 - Don’t apologize for your body, instead say “thank you for being flexible, you’re a great friend”
- 

Tips for Avoiding Isolation

- **Wear appropriate pads (different for bladder vs bowel)**
- **Keep an emergency kit nearby (at work, in the car)**
- **Take a separate car in case you need to go home**
- **Make a potty plan**
 - Map out rest stops and bathrooms (especially when traveling long distances or internationally)
 - Toilet finder apps

INTERACTIVE CHAT

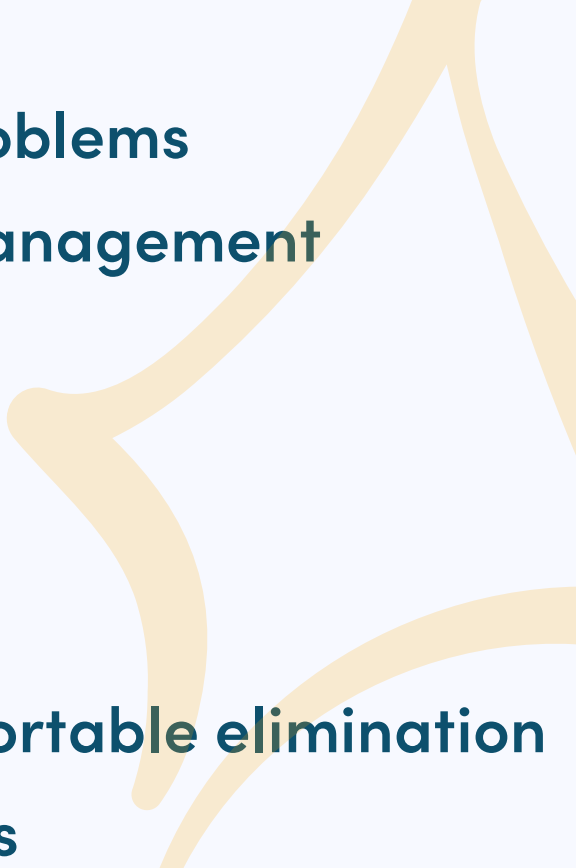


IN THE CHAT



**Please share your tips for managing
your symptoms on the go**

Providers Who Can Help

- **Neurologist** – referrals to the appropriate specialists
 - **Urologist** – assessment and management of bladder problems
 - **Gastroenterologist**– bowel function and constipation management
 - **Nurse** – bladder and bowel strategies
 - **Physical therapist**
 - Exercise and activity recommendations
 - Pelvic floor physical therapy
 - **Occupational therapist** – tools and positioning for comfortable elimination
 - **Mental health professional** – emotional and social issues
- 

SPEAK UP: Your Bowel and Bladder Symptoms CAN Be Successfully Managed

Don't tolerate uncomfortable symptoms:

- “It's just because I have MS”
- “These are things most people my age deal with”
- “It must be my prostate”

If your provider doesn't ask – bring it up yourself

The earlier you seek treatment, the more effective the treatment can be... and the sooner your life can get back on track



Q+A



CONNECT WITH US



TIKTOK

@CanDoMultipleSclerosis



FACEBOOK

@CanDoMultipleSclerosis



TWITTER

@CanDoMS



INSTAGRAM

@CanDoMultipleSclerosis

07.05.2023

Next Month:

Shared Decision Making

Your MS. Your Choice. Your Voice.

CAN DO
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

WEBINAR 
WEDNESDAYS

THIS WEBINAR IS
SPONSORED BY:





The preceding program is copyrighted by Can Do Multiple Sclerosis. It is provided for your personal educational and referential use only. Any repurposing or dissemination of its content requires the consent by Can Do Multiple Sclerosis.

© CAN DO MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS