



Take Charge of Your MS Treatment Decisions

CAN DO
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

MS DISEASE MODIFYING TREATMENTS (DMTs)

There are over 20 Disease Modifying Treatments (DMTs) approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) for MS. These MS DMTs work by adjusting the immune system, which can mistakenly attack the protective covering of nerves (myelin) in the brain and spinal cord, also called the central nervous system (CNS). Each DMT can reduce the frequency of relapses (new episodes of symptoms, lasting more than 24 hours), limit new areas of inflammation and damage in your CNS, and may delay disease progression.

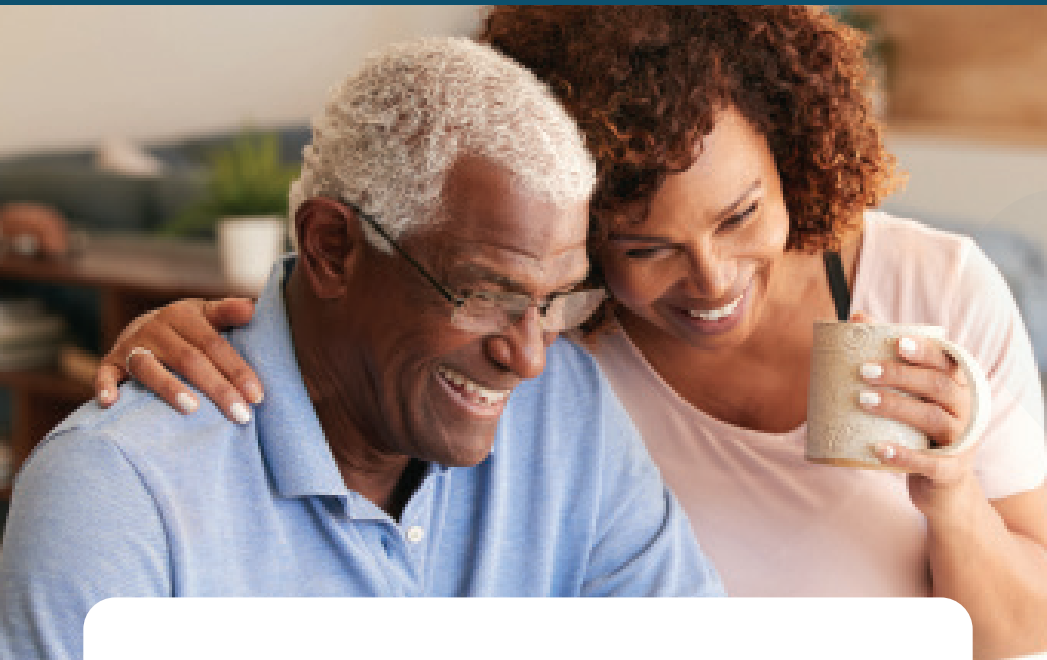
MS DMTs are an investment in the future rather than an intervention to help you feel better today. While these treatments don't cure MS or directly relieve symptoms (which may be managed with other medications), their goal is to achieve 'no disease activity.' This means no relapses, no new neurologic changes, and no new lesions or inflammation on brain or spinal cord MRIs.



RESEARCH INDICATES THAT THE EARLY USE OF HIGH-EFFICACY MS DISEASE MODIFYING TREATMENTS (HEDMT) MAY LEAD TO IMPROVED OUTCOMES. TALK TO YOUR MS SPECIALIST TO LEARN IF A HEDMT IS RIGHT FOR YOU



WHAT ARE MS DMTs?



MS disease modifying treatments have changed since the first DMT was approved back in 1993. Efficacy has improved significantly, such that MS experts have designated certain DMTs as high, moderate or low efficacy. The designations were based upon large analyses of available data and individual clinical trial data. The following are the currently FDA-approved MS DMTs, and their efficacy (high, moderate or low):

HIGH EFFICACY

ALEMTUZUMAB

Lemtrada® is given by IV infusion in two treatment courses: The first course is daily infusion for five consecutive days. The second course is given on three consecutive days 12 months after the first course. Lemtrada is thought to work by binding to a protein on the surface of numerous immune cells causing their populations to become depleted.

ANTI CD-20

Kesimpta® (self administered once monthly after three weekly starter doses), Ocrevus® (infused at an infusion center twice per year), Zunovo™ (in-office subcutaneous injection), and Briumvi® (infused) are thought to work by temporarily depleting the population of B-cells, which are white blood cells that contribute to inflammation.



HIGH EFFICACY

NATALILZUMAB

Tysabri® and Tyruko® are given in an infusion center or medical office by intravenous infusion, every 28 days. They are thought to work by blocking immune system cells from entering the CNS.

ORAL CLADRIBINE

Mavenclad® is an oral medication taken in two treatment courses. Course one is divided into two cycles, each over 4-5 days and separated by about one month. The second course is taken one year later using the same cycles as the initial dose. The dose is weight based. Mavenclad is thought to work by depleting the population of certain white blood cells known to contribute to the MS disease process.



MODERATE EFFICACY

ORAL FUMARATES

Bafiertam®, dimethyl fumarate, Tecfidera®, and Vumerity® are taken by mouth twice daily and are thought to work by activating a pathway in the CNS that limits inflammation/damage.

S1P RECEPTOR MODULATORS

Gilenya®, fingolimod, Mayzent®, Ponvory®, Zeposia® are taken by mouth once daily. They are thought to work by keeping certain immune cells called lymphocytes “trapped” in the lymph nodes which prevents them from circulating into the bloodstream and into the CNS, where they can cause damage.




LOW EFFICACY

GLATIRAMER ACETATE

Copaxone® and Glatopa®, (glatiramer acetate injection) are self-injected subcutaneously daily or three times/week and thought to work by modifying immune processes that are believed responsible for the MS disease process.

INTERFERON BETA'S

Betaseron® (every other day subcutaneous self-injection), Extavia® (every other day subcutaneous self-injection), Plegridy® (subcutaneous self-injection every 14 days), Rebif®, (subcutaneous self-injection three times/week) & Avonex® (intramuscular self-injection once weekly) are thought to work by reducing the MS inflammatory response.



WHILE EFFICACY IS IMPORTANT, THERE ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS INCLUDING HOW THE DRUG IS GIVEN, SIDE EFFECTS, RISKS, FAMILY PLANNING, LIFESTYLE AND COST THAT MUST ALSO BE CONSIDERED.



SIDE EFFECTS AND RISKS

Each of the MS DMTs has side effects and risks. Most of these are mild – but for some people side effects can be more significant. It is important to review the side effects and risks with your MS provider before you make any treatment decisions!

HOW TO DECIDE WHAT DMT TO START?



IF YOU HAVE JUST BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH MS OR YOU ARE CONSIDERING A CHANGE IN YOUR DMT, THE DECISION MAY SEEM DAUNTING. AFTER ALL, YOU ARE NOT AN MS SPECIALIST. JUST REMEMBER YOU KNOW YOUR NEEDS BEST AND YOUR PHYSICIAN WANTS TO MAKE THIS DECISION WITH YOU, NOT FOR YOU.

- ☑ Your MS provider can inform you about your MS and also the benefits, side effects, and risks of the various DMTs. They can also provide you with resources that you can review at home.
- ☑ You know your goals, your work schedule, when you might want to start or add to your family, your childcare or family responsibilities, your level of risk concern and your support system.
- ☑ Your MS provider cannot know any of this important information unless you work together on the treatment decision. For example, if it is challenging to take off work or family duties for treatment, will you be able to take a DMT that requires several hours in the medical office every month? Perhaps another DMT would work better for your situation.

Having all your questions answered is important as you are considering your treatment options. However, even after careful consideration and consistently taking your medication, you may need to make a treatment change at some point in the future. You may experience side effects, or the medication is not working to control your MS. If this occurs, you and your MS specialist will review the options and make a new treatment decision.

WHAT TO ASK



HERE ARE SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU TALK WITH YOUR MS SPECIALIST AND MAKE AN INFORMED TREATMENT DECISION WITH CONFIDENCE.



UNDERSTAND TREATMENT OPTIONS

- What are the main types of DMTs used to treat MS?
- Which DMTs are appropriate for my type of MS?
- What are the goals of DMTs—what can I expect in terms of slowing disease progression or reducing relapses?

WHAT ABOUT FAMILY PLANNING

- Can I continue the DMT if I want to start a family? Will the DMT harm the baby?
- Do I need to stop the DMT before trying to become pregnant?
- What will happen with my MS if I stop the DMT?
- If I decide to stop the DMT, when should I restart it?
- Can I be on a DMT and safely breastfeed?

SAFETY AND EFFICACY

- What should I expect from MS DMTs?
- How do I know if the DMT is working?
- What are the benefits of different types of DMTs?
- What are the risks of each type of DMT? What can be done to limit my risk?
- Is monitoring needed while I am on a DMT? What does that look like?

IMPACT ON MY DAILY LIFE

- Will I need to take time off work for treatment?
- Will I be able to travel while I am on a DMT?
- Will the DMT cause more fatigue?
- Will my MS symptoms feel worse?
- If I stop the DMT, will I get worse?

OVERALL

- What if the DMT I am taking does not work?
- How often will we reevaluate the treatment with the DMT?
- What do you look at to track my progress and response to the DMT?

You are in charge!

Living with MS comes with challenges, but you hold the power to shape your path forward. Stay informed, actively participate in your healthcare decisions, and advocate for what you need. Knowledge is your strongest ally! Pharmaceutical companies often provide copay assistance.

Be Prepared:

Write down your questions before each visit.

Stay Curious:

Dive into trusted resources to learn more.

Speak Up:

Share your goals and concerns with your healthcare team.

Explore These Trusted Resources:

CANDO-MS.ORG

Delivers health and wellness education to help families living with MS thrive.

NMSS.ORG

Comprehensive support from the National MS Society.

MYMSAA.ORG

Resources and programs tailored for your journey.