

What To Do About MS Fatigue

CAN DO
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

WEBINAR 
WEDNESDAYS

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19

JUMPSTART

Strategies for Recharging Your Battery

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

NEWLY DIAGNOSED MEETUP

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

MS MOVES MEETUP



CANDO-MS.ORG

Coaching Programs

Connect with a group of people to give and receive support.



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CanDo-MS.org/Coaching

Reclaim Your Rest: Sleep Strategies for MS

Series Starting on 3/3
6:00-7:15pm ET

Eating Well With MS: Healthy Changes That Last

Series Starting 6/9
6:00-7:15pm ET

Everyday Energy: Managing Fatigue With MS

Series Starting 9/15
12:00-1:15pm ET

Community Programs

2026 Program Dates & Locations



Oklahoma City, OK

Saturday, March 28

San Antonio, TX

Saturday, April 25

Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX

Saturday, April 25

Columbia, MD

Saturday, May 2

Charlotte, NC

Friday, May 29

Seattle, WA

Saturday, June 27

Fort Collins, CO

Saturday, August 22

Phoenix, AZ

Saturday, September 26

Sacramento, CA

Saturday, October 17

New Orleans, LA

Saturday, November 7

Atlanta, GA

Saturday, November 14

Register Today!
CanDo-MS.org/CP



How to Ask Questions During the Webinar

Type in your questions using
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Provide comments and engage
with the speakers and audience
using the **Chat Box**

NEW! Closed captioning

YOUR SPEAKERS



Lorelei Benham
**Speech Language
Pathologist**

Georgia



Rashi Agrawal
Physical Therapist

Texas


OUR PLAN FOR TODAY



Part 1

- Understanding Fatigue in Multiple Sclerosis
- Become familiar with the secondary causes of fatigue in MS

Part 2

- Learn about multidisciplinary treatment options
 - Q & A
- 



One Word Exercise

**WHAT IS ONE WORD THAT
COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU
THINK OF MS FATIGUE?**

What Makes MS-Related Fatigue Unique?



Very common: affects a majority of people with MS (often reported as the most disabling symptom)

Multidimensional: physical fatigue, cognitive fatigue, and psychosocial elements (mood, motivation)

Not solely linked to activity levels: can occur even after rest; severity may not correlate with EDSS or relapse status

Interacts with heat, humidity, infections, sleep disturbances, and medication side effects

Day-to-day variability: fatigue can fluctuate across days and even within the same day

How MS Fatigue Is Perceived



Patient perspective:

Frustration with invisible symptoms; fatigue may be misunderstood as laziness or lack of effort

Impact on independence, work, social life, and self-image



Clinician perspective:

Fatigue often under-recognized or attributed to lifestyle factors

Requires systematic assessment and ruling out treatable contributors (anemia, thyroid issues, sleep disorders, medications)



Communication tips:

Use fatigue-specific conversations: onset, pattern, triggers, impact on function

Bring symptom diaries or fatigue scales to appointments

What Drives MS Fatigue

- CNS energy metabolism changes: impaired mitochondrial function, reduced aerobic capacity at the cellular level
- Demyelination and axonal loss affecting nerve conduction efficiency
- Inflammation and immune activity can contribute to “sickness behavior” and perceived fatigue



Secondary Causes Of Fatigue In MS

- “Secondary fatigue” is used to describe fatigue that comes from other problems linked to MS, not directly from nerve damage.
- Secondary causes can usually be managed or decreased through environmental modifications or medication management



Common Secondary Causes Include:

- Poor Sleep (Pain, Bladder Issues, Sleep Apnea)
- Medications (For Pain, Spasticity, Mood)
- Depression or Anxiety
- Infections (Especially UTIs)
- Pain or Muscle Stiffness (Spasticity)
- Heat Sensitivity
- Low Activity / Deconditioning
- Other Medical Issues (Anemia, Thyroid, Dehydration, Vitamin D Deficiency, etc.)




How To Measure And Track Fatigue



- Fatigue Scales Commonly Used:
 - Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS)
 - Modified Fatigue Impact Scale (MFIS)
 - Fatigue Scale for Motor and Cognitive Functions (FSMC)
- Functional Assessment:
 - Impact on daily activities, work, mood, physical function
- Sleep and Mood Screening:
 - Epworth Sleepiness Scale, STOP-BANG for Sleep Apnea, PHQ-9 for Depression
- Practical Tracking:
 - Fatigue Diary/Log (Time of Day, Intensity, Triggers, Activity Type, Sleep Quality)

Who Can Help With Managing MS Fatigue?

- **Neurologist / MS Provider** – Manages MS and reviews medications
- **Primary Care Provider** – Checks for infections, anemia, thyroid issues
- **Physical Therapist (PT)** – Improves strength, balance, endurance
- **Occupational Therapist (OT)** – Teaches energy conservation and task planning
- **Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)** – Supports thinking skills and fatigue strategies
- **Mental Health Provider** – Helps with mood, stress, coping
- **Sleep Specialist** – Treats sleep problems



Polling Question

Have you received support from any of these professionals to help address your fatigue?

- Neurologist
- Primary Care Provider
- MS Nurse
- PT
- OT
- SLP
- Mental Health Provider
- Sleep Specialist

Managing MS Fatigue: A Comprehensive, Personalized Approach



Medical optimization



Sleep and Rest Strategies



Exercise and Energy Management



Cognitive and Psychological Support



Nutrition and Hydration



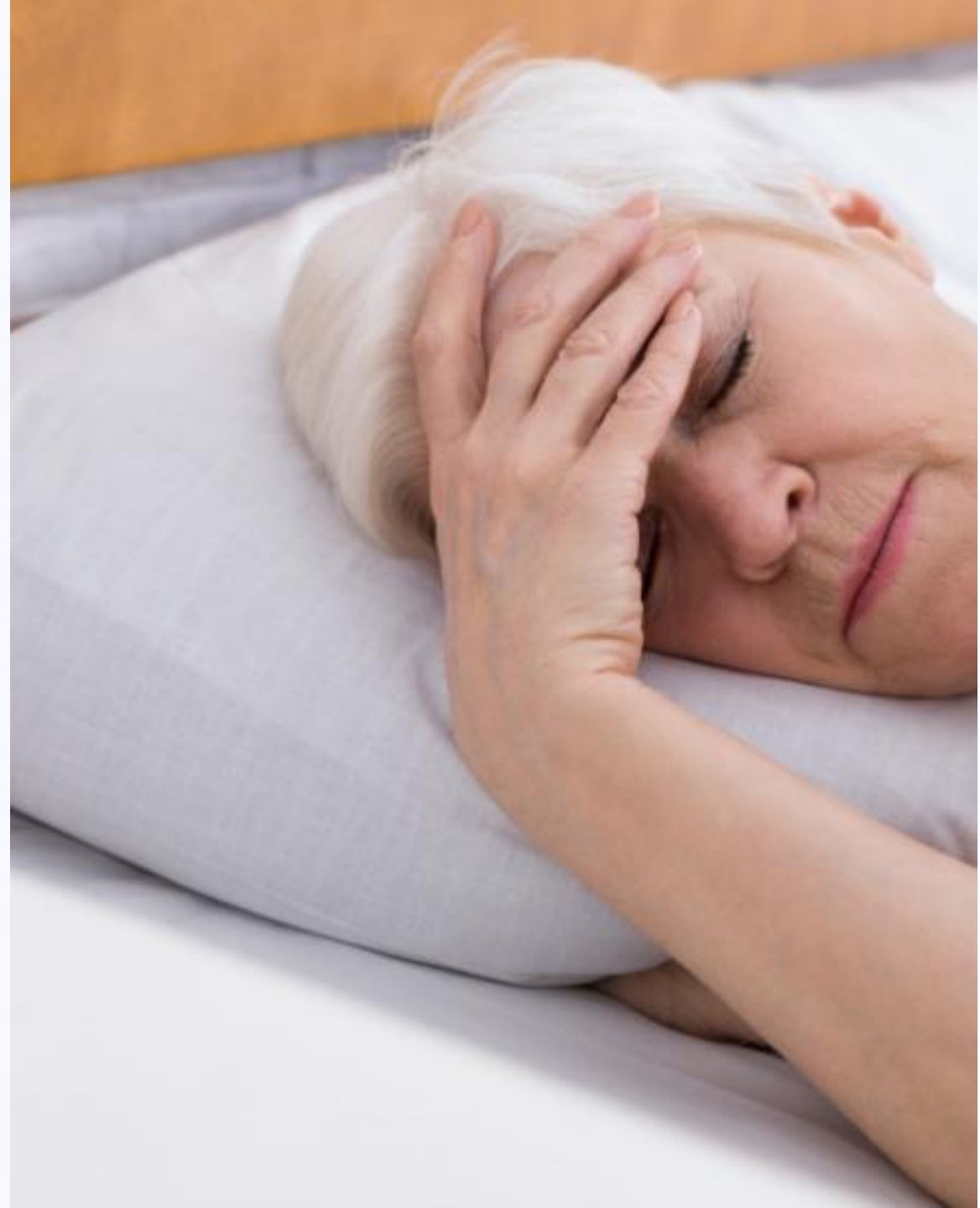
Heat Management



Medication Optimization

Sleep

- Keep a regular bedtime and wake time
- Treat pain, bladder issues, or sleep apnea
- Create a calm sleep routine
- *Set alarms to help keep you on schedule so you can be consistent



Nutrition

- Eat regular, balanced meals
- Stay hydrated
- Limit sugary snacks and excess caffeine
- Include protein, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains



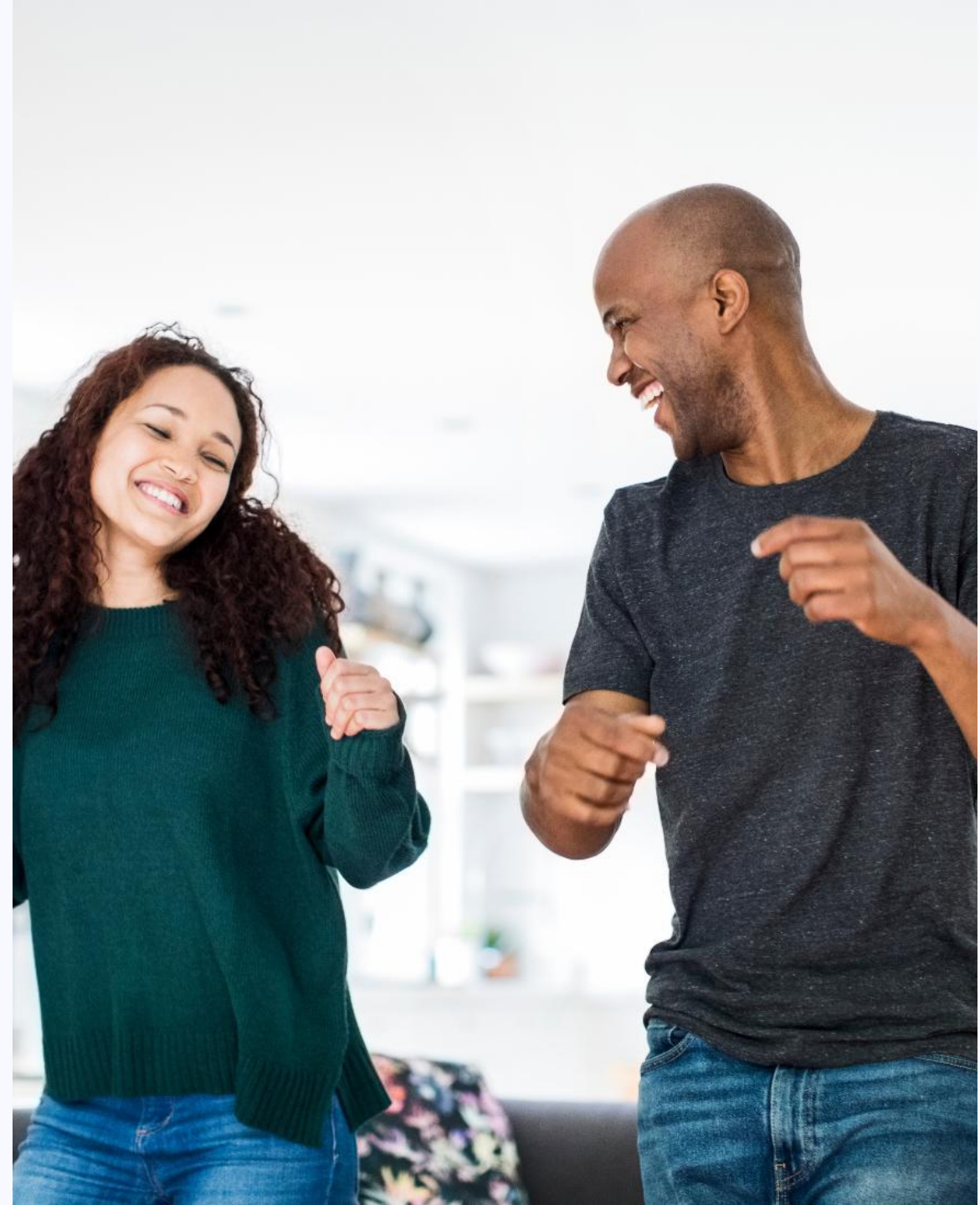
Stress

- Practice relaxation (breathing, mindfulness, gentle movement)
- Ask for help when needed
- Take breaks during the day



Energy Tips

- Pace yourself
- Plan hard tasks for your best time of day
- Take short rest breaks
- Use cooling strategies if heat sensitive
- Sit when possible



Cognition (Thinking) Tips

- Do one task at a time
- Use lists, calendars, alarms
- Break big tasks into small steps
- Reduce distractions
- Prioritize tasks based on energy levels
- Set realistic expectations

*Fatigue affects both your physical energy and cognitive energy



Practical Tips



Start with a single, high-impact change (e.g., sleep improvement or energy-conserving strategies) and build



Use “traffic-light” planning: green (low effort, high return), yellow (moderate), red (avoid)

Everyday Life Strategies

- Build a daily routine that balances activity and rest
 - Prioritize essential tasks when energy is highest
- Workplace and school accommodations
 - Flexible scheduling, breaks, ergonomic adjustments, use of assistive technologies
- Support networks and resources
 - MS societies, patient advocacy groups, online communities, local support groups



How To Work With Your Care Team

- Self-advocacy and communication
 - Prepare questions for visits, request referrals (physical therapy, occupational therapy, mental health, sleep specialist)
- Create a fatigue management plan with your providers
 - Document triggers, successful strategies, and barriers



Q+A



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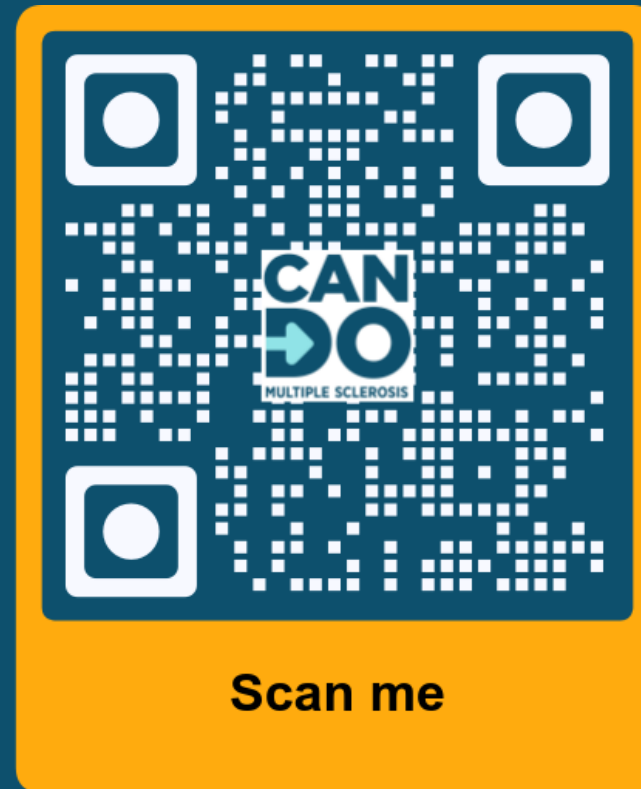


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