

The Power of Connection

An African proverb says, “When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.” This illustrates the power of connection to face life-changing challenges such as MS. You don’t have to deal with MS on your own. Begin building your “web” of support with your doctor and health-care team, family and friends, faith leaders, peer support groups and others.

Taking Charge of Your MS

MS Navigators work to find solutions throughout your MS journey, as needs and challenges evolve. We explore all available resources to ensure you have what you need to live day to day: proper housing, equipment for independent living and access to health care. And we connect you to the information, education, resources and tools to help you be more powerful than the challenges of MS, including:

- What you need to know when facing a new diagnosis
- Symptom management strategies
- Financial planning
- Understanding benefits such as health insurance
- Working through employment issues

- Connecting with other people like you
- Dealing with a crisis
- And more

MS Navigators are available Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT. To connect, call 1-800-344-4867, chat or email ContactUsNMSS@nmss.org.

Diversity Advisory Committee

The National MS Society mobilizes people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS. To support this mission, the Society established the Diversity Advisory Committee — which advises on the best approaches to reaching and engaging the Black community.

**MS STOPS PEOPLE FROM MOVING.
WE EXIST TO MAKE
SURE IT DOESN'T.
TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER.**

nationalMSSociety.org
MSconnection.org

**For Information:
1-800-344-4867**

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MS and the Black Community



MS
National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

JACKIE, DIAGNOSED IN 1997



Diagnosis

Physicians use several strategies to diagnose MS. These include a careful review of medical history, a neurological examination, and various tests including blood work, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and spinal fluid analysis. Physicians must find evidence of damage that has occurred in at least two separate areas of the CNS at different points in time, and that cannot be explained by other causes.

MS in the Black Population

The myth that people who are Black do not get MS is just that — a myth.

In fact, studies suggest that MS can be equally or possibly even more common in the Black population, particularly in Black women. MS can also be especially active in Black individuals, who are more likely to:

- Experience more relapses and have worse recovery
- Experience greater disability
- Require ambulatory assistance earlier in the disease course

Treatment

Researchers are working hard to find a cure for MS. Today, the treatment of

MS includes medications to modify the disease course, treat relapses, and manage symptoms. Equally important are lifestyle modifications and strategies to improve function and safety to enhance the quality of life for people living with MS.

All evidence indicates the earlier individuals begin treatment, the more promising their long-term health outcomes are likely to be.

Studies suggest that Black individuals respond differently than Caucasians to some treatments. Work with your doctor to find the right treatment options to help you manage the disease and move your life forward.

Healthy Living

Individuals living with MS are not immune to other health issues, and some health conditions can even make MS worse. Healthy nutrition, proper exercise, getting enough sleep, managing stress, a strong support network and an active social life are all important to living well with MS.

Learn more about Black and African Americans and MS: **nationalMSSociety.org/African-AmericansandMS**

What is MS?

Multiple sclerosis (MS), an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system (CNS), interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and the body. The exact cause of MS is currently unknown, but it is associated with inflammation and degeneration within the CNS.

Symptoms

Symptoms of MS are unpredictable. They can vary from person to person, and from day to day in the same person. Common symptoms of MS include: fatigue, numbness, difficulty walking or maintaining balance, changes in sexual function, vision problems, problems with memory and thinking, and depression.