

KEEP S'MYELIN[®]

A NEWSLETTER FOR KIDS ABOUT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

MS IS UNPREDICTABLE.

MS OFTEN CHANGES. It may change over the course of a day, over the course of a week or month, and maybe over the course of a year.

★ WHY DOESN'T MS JUST STAY THE SAME?

We don't know exactly why, but we do know that a person with **MS** may have lots of energy at certain times of the day, but feel very tired at other times. We know that some people with **MS** have days or weeks or months when they feel better, and then days or weeks or months when they feel worse.

★ THIS CAN BE CONFUSING AND FRUSTRATING FOR EVERYONE!

Sometimes when a person is sick with a cold or fever, his or her **MS** symptoms get worse for a while. When the cold goes away, the symptoms may get better. **MS** may feel worse when the weather is very hot and then feel better when the weather becomes cool and dry. And sometimes **MS** just changes! This is why we say **MS** is unpredictable.

★ UNPREDICTABLE MEANS WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT. ★

THE BEST WAY to deal with something that is unpredictable is by being prepared to change your plans if you have to. So, if your family has planned a day at the zoo, but then your mom or dad doesn't feel up to it, try to change your plans to something less strenuous. For example, you could decide to stay home and watch a movie together or have a picnic in the backyard. That's called being **FLEXIBLE**.

★ IT'S AN IMPORTANT THING TO BE WHEN YOU HAVE MS IN YOUR HOUSE! ★



MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

(MS FOR SHORT) is a disease that affects the central nervous system (the brain, optic nerves and the spinal cord). The brain is like a computer that tells the body what to do. The spinal cord is like a thick wire attached to the computer. Messages travel between the brain, spinal cord, and other parts of the body.



WHEN A PERSON HAS MS the covering (myelin) that protects the nerves gets damaged. Scars form where the myelin is damaged. As messages travel from the brain, they sometimes get stuck or slowed down by these scars. When this happens, the other parts of the body can't always do what the brain is telling them to do.

SOMETIMES people with MS have trouble seeing. Sometimes their arms and legs feel weak or their skin feels "tingly" (like pins and needles). Sometimes they lose their balance, feel very tired, or have trouble walking. MS problems like these are called *symptoms*.

SYMPTOMS of MS can come and go. We don't know exactly why. Sometimes you don't even notice the symptoms. At other times they are pretty obvious. It's hard for a person with MS to know from one day to the next how he or she will feel. That is why we say that **MS** is unpredictable.

Healthy Myelin Sheath



Damaged Myelin Sheath

INTERESTING FACT:

Multiple means **MANY**.
Sclerosis means **SCARS**.



So, multiple sclerosis means
"**MANY SCARS**!"

KEEP S'MYELIN Readers WE WANT YOU!

We love to publish your pictures, stories, and poems about MS.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR WORK:

Tell us how your family learns about MS together, how you feel about having MS in your family, what advice you would give other kids about having a mom or dad with MS, how you help your mom or dad, or whom you talk with about MS.

MS
National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

KEEP S'MYELIN

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or e-mail to:
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YOU ASKED, WE ANSWERED.

Q: My dad says that going to the beach isn't fun for him anymore. When he gets hot, his **MS** feels a lot worse. He has trouble walking and his vision gets blurry. Why does that happen? How can I help him feel better?

A: Many people with MS feel worse when their body gets **OVERHEATED**. When the body's temperature goes up—even a tiny bit—the messages that travel from the brain to the rest of the body can't travel as fast. This makes a person's symptoms act up until his or her body cools down again. Hot weather, exercise, or a fever can all cause someone to feel uncomfortable for awhile. This is called a pseudoexacerbation (soo-doe-egg-zass-er-bay-shun) — try saying that three times fast!). The good thing is that people begin to feel better as soon as their body temperature returns to normal. You can help your dad by helping him stay cool. He should stay out of the bright sun, drink lots of cold drinks, and maybe even wear a cooling collar or vest to help his body **STAY COOL**.



MY MOMMY HAS MS

by: Madison
(7 years old)

My mommy has **MS**
and I don't like it.
I wish that they can find
a cure because I want my
mommy to be happy
and play with me.
I hope and hope they find
a cure for my mommy.
My mommy takes shots
all the time, but she still
lets me sit in her lap.

♥♥ Madison



MS IN MY LIFE

by
Bobbi Sue
(age 12)

My dad has MS. He lives just fine.
Sometimes it gets rough to survive.
But hey, he's still around.
He might worry me from time to time.
I wonder what to do.
Mom's always there to calm me down.
He loves us both very much.
And we love him very much back.

I talk to my best friends and they understand
they help me out a lot from time to time.
They are very trustful.

MS, I wish would leave for good
and never return to my
upside down world.



KEEP S'MYELIN[®]

KIDS



Ben:

"Gee, it's really hot today. I hope my mom is OK. I've heard that heat can make **MS** worse for a while."

Michael:

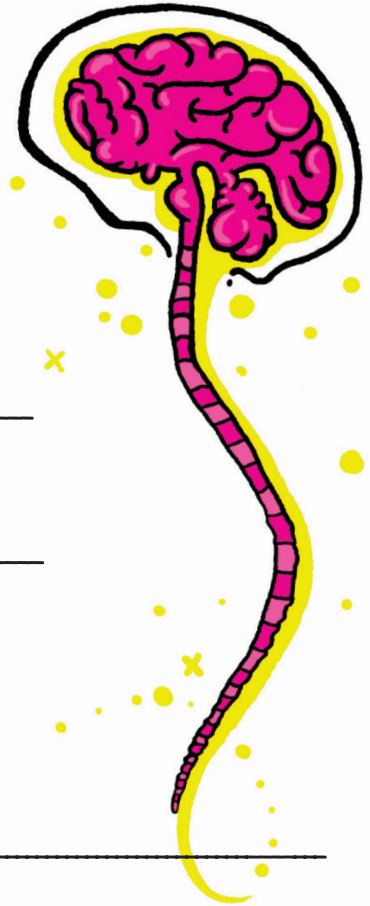
"Maybe your mom could wear a 'cooling vest.' It's a neat vest with lots of pockets that hold those frozen ice packs—the kind that keep your lunch cool. It keeps your whole body cool!"

Crystal:

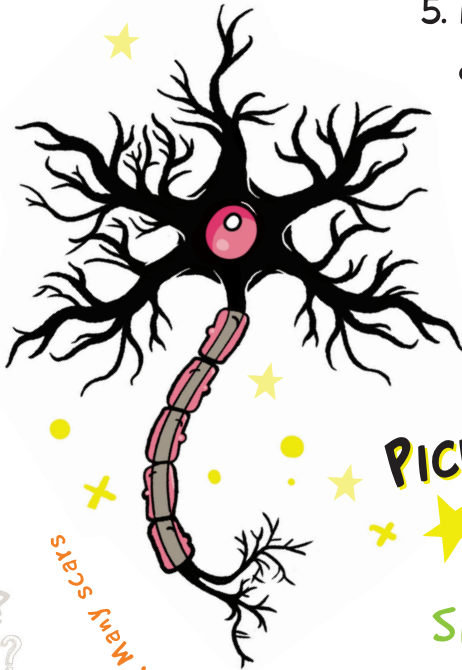
Hey Ben, you should tell her about it... And get one for me too!!!



MS QUIZ!



1. The covering around the nerves is called _____
2. The physical problems caused by MS are called _____
3. MS can change from one day to the next - that's why we say it's _____
4. MS affects the brain and spinal cord, which together make up the _____
5. Many of the messages going from the brain to other parts of the body travel along the _____
6. The brain acts like a _____
7. The words multiple sclerosis mean _____



PICK OUT YOUR ANSWERS FROM THE WORDS BELOW:

Symptoms Computer
 Spinal cord Unpredictable central nervous system
 Myelin Many scars



1. Myelin, 2. Symptoms, 3. Unpredictable, 4. Central nervous system, 5. Spinal cord, 6. Computer, 7. Many scars



CROSSWORD!!!



THE SEASONS WORD SEARCH

Hint: words are across, down and backwards!

L	E	A	V	E	S	T	O	H	B	H
Q	A	U	C	L	U	K	N	E	O	L
U	S	T	O	L	M	B	W	O	N	S
B	T	U	L	O	M	R	E	I	W	Y
G	E	M	D	B	E	E	A	C	H	T
T	R	N	T	I	R	E	R	E	Z	F
S	P	R	I	N	G	Z	T	M	X	D
R	B	H	N	Y	D	E	R	A	I	N
T	H	U	M	I	D	I	T	Y	T	S
N	E	W	Y	E	A	R	R	K	C	S
S	U	N	N	Z	W	I	N	T	E	R

- COLD HOT AUTUMN SUMMER ICE
- HUMIDITY LEAVES BREEZE SUN
- SPRING RAIN WINTER





National Multiple Sclerosis Society

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* We want your feedback; see Parents' Section to see how you can participate.

ISSUE #20
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Families can count on the National MS Society!

To learn more about the resources available to you and your family, please contact an MS Navigator at:

1-800-344-4867

JOKES!

Which is faster: heat or cold?
ANSWER: Heat, because you can catch cold!

David's father has three sons: Snap, Crackle and ____?
ANSWER: David

What kind of car does Mickey Mouse's wife drive?
ANSWER: A Minnie Vani!