



Multiple Sclerosis (MS)



Overview

This is a disease of your brain and spinal cord. MS causes the thin layer of tissue that protects your nerve cells (called the "myelin sheath") to become damaged. This makes it hard for signals to travel between your brain and your body. Signals can slow down, or they can be blocked completely. This can cause a wide range of problems.

Causes

We don't understand what causes MS. Some believe it's an autoimmune disease. That's when your immune system attacks your own body. MS may be linked to something you are exposed to in your environment. Genetic factors may play a role, too.

Symptoms

MS causes many different problems, and they vary from person to person. For some people, the symptoms of MS are mild. For others, MS is disabling. You may have physical problems such as numbness, weakness, tingling or pain in parts of your body. You may have dizziness and trouble walking. MS can cause double vision and blindness. It can cause slurred speech. You may have trouble controlling your bladder or bowels. MS can also affect your brain. It can make you feel fatigued. It can make it hard for you to think clearly. It may affect your emotions. And, it can lead to depression. These symptoms may come and go, with long periods in between where your symptoms improve or go away completely. Over time, your symptoms may worsen.

Treatment

There is no cure for MS, but there are treatments that can help manage your symptoms and slow the progress of the disease. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for you.