



Multiple System Atrophy (MSA)



Overview

Every day your body does many complex things, like breathing and digesting food, that you don't have to consciously think about. These functions are controlled by your autonomic nervous system. Multiple system atrophy (we call it "MSA") is a brain disorder that affects this system. It causes a wide range of serious problems throughout your body. And, it gets worse over time.

Causes

Why does it happen? We don't understand the cause. We know it's linked to the death of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. It may result from a variety of factors. It could be linked to your genetics, something in your environment, or a combination of factors. More research is needed.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms? You can have things like stiffness, tremors and problems with balance and coordination. You may have trouble speaking and swallowing. You may not be able to control your eye movements. You can have lightheadedness and fainting when standing from a sitting or lying position. You may have constipation and trouble controlling your bladder. It may affect your sleep. It may affect your emotions and your sexual function. There are a few types of this disorder. And, your symptoms depend on what type you have. Ask your doctor for a full list of the symptoms you may experience.

Treatment

How do we treat it? There is no cure for this disorder. But we can manage your symptoms with medications and various types of therapies. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.