



Emotional disturbances are very common in patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) and may include mood swings, anxiety, and depression. These symptoms can occur at any point during the course of the disease. Left untreated, they reduce quality of life and can make other symptoms like fatigue, and pain feel worse.

## Symptoms of depression

- Fatigue
- Feelings of sadness and hopelessness
- Changes in appetite
- Loss of interest or pleasure in everyday activities
- Changes in sleep pattern
- Trouble concentrating
- Feelings of guilt
- Thoughts of suicide

## Treatment

- The treatment for depression or any other mood disturbance differs from person to person. Antidepressant drugs may be used.
- In some cases, your healthcare provider may refer you to a Psychiatrist who can help manage your medications.
- **SSRIs** (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) inhibit the reuptake of a chemical produced within the body (serotonin) which is known to elevate mood. Commonly prescribed SSRIs include Celexa®, Lexapro®, Paxil®, Prozac®, and Zoloft®. Side effects may include headache, nausea, sleeplessness, anxiety, drowsiness, and sexual dysfunction. which may subside with time.
- **SNRIs** (serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors) include Cymbalta® and Effexor®. They work in a similar way to SSRIs and have similar side effects.
- Other drugs which belong to other drug classes, such as Desyrel®, Remeron®, and Wellbutrin®, are options which may result in fewer side effects, but may require close monitoring by a Psychiatrist.



If you experience any of these symptoms, talk to your healthcare provider.

# Coping strategies

Coping with MS and emotional disturbances can be difficult and it is important to think about your overall wellness. Here are some things that may help:



## Exercise regularly

Regular exercise can benefit your overall health and sense of well-being. It helps your body relieve stress and may improve your energy levels.

## Get a good night's sleep

Sleep is essential for maintaining good health. Following a sleep schedule, avoiding daytime naps, turning off electronics before bed, and avoiding caffeine may help you get a better night's sleep.

## Stay in touch with friends and family

Sharing your feelings with others can offer more insight and help you cope more easily with any problems. Having a strong support group can help you during a difficult time.

## Breathing exercises

Breathing exercises can help you relax by making your body feel like it does when you are already relaxed. Deep breathing several times is one of the best ways to lower stress in your body.

If you are having thoughts of suicide or feel that you are at risk of hurting yourself, call the National Crisis Hotline at **1-800-273-TALK (8225)** or text **"ANSWER"** to **839863**.