



Newly Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis: A First-Time Guide

Prepared for the Multiple Sclerosis Association of South Africa (MSA-SA)

Receiving a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) can feel overwhelming. This guide provides practical steps, checklists, and resources to help you navigate your first months after diagnosis.

1. Process the Diagnosis

Give yourself time to adjust and learn about MS gradually.

2. Understand Your MS Type

Ask your neurologist about your diagnosis, MRI findings, and prognosis.

3. Build Your Healthcare Team

Work with neurologists, GPs, therapists, and other specialists.

4. Discuss Treatment Options

Learn about disease-modifying therapies and treatment goals.

5. Organise Medical Records

Keep MRI reports, prescriptions, and test results together.

6. Track Symptoms

Record symptoms, relapses, triggers, and treatment effects.

7. Support Your Mental Health

Seek counselling, support groups, and emotional support.

8. Manage Fatigue

Prioritise rest, pacing, and healthy sleep habits.

9. Stay Active

Maintain appropriate physical activity and physiotherapy guidance.

10. Understand Medical Aid Benefits

Review cover, authorisations, and treatment funding.

11. Build a Support Network

Connect with family, friends, and fellow MS patients.

12. Connect with MSA-SA

Access support groups, education, and community resources.

Neurologist Appointment Checklist

- What type of MS do I have?
- What did my MRI show?
- What treatment do you recommend?
- What symptoms should I monitor?
- How often should I have follow-up MRIs?
- What should I do during a relapse?
- Who should I contact between appointments?

Symptom Tracker

Date | Symptom | Severity (1-10) | Possible Trigger | Notes

Medication Tracker

Medication | Dose | Start Date | Side Effects | Notes

Useful Resources

MSA-SA: www.msa-sa.org.za

MS International Federation: www.msif.org

National MS Society: www.nationalmssociety.org