



FACT SHEET

Sensory Changes & Multiple Sclerosis

Loss or alteration of feelings from the body may be symptoms of MS. Changes are caused by damage to the sensory pathways of the Central Nervous System. The brain receives no information (numbness) or abnormal information (tingling, pins and needles) from the body.

Sensations may include:

- Numbness, or unpleasant tingling, itching, pins and needles
- Reduced or increased feeling - less tolerance to things not normally painful
- Burning or increased warmth, or the inability to feel hot or cold, temperature abnormalities
- Tight bands - eg around trunk - (MS Hug)
- Electric shocks, or an electric shock from the back of the head to spine (Lhermitte's sign)
- A decreased sense of vibration
- Decreased awareness of where a part of the body is in space - proprioception
- Difficulty holding objects or placing objects precisely

Changes in sensation are often in the hands and feet, though they may be anywhere in the body. Each person with MS may experience different symptoms.

Safety is very important when there is a loss or reduction in sensation of limbs. Cuts and bruises, burns, infections and pressure sores can occur quickly, and unnoticed. Awareness of the sensory loss and extra vigilance needs to be a part of daily MS management.

Prevention strategies can include:

- Regular checking of skin, with the use of creams or oils for good skin hydration
- Pressure mattresses, cushions
- Use gloves, pressure stockings
- Use rubber gloves washing up and oven mitts, pot holders when handling hot utensils
- Use larger handles on drawers and cupboards
- Use utensils with wooden or plastic handles
- Use insulated cups with large handles
- Test bath water before entering
- Use soft shoe insoles



MS Queensland

