



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR neurologist

WRITTEN BY GUEST CONTRIBUTOR
AND MS CLINIC NURSE, KAYE HOOPER



The first time you see the neurologist

The first appointment with your neurologist can be lengthy. The neurologist needs time to ask you about your medical history, carry out a neurological examination, view your MRI results and focus on any possible past neurological events. Before you go to your first appointment, note down any questions you may have and during the consultation, ask for clarification if you don't understand what is being said. Many people find that having a family member attend the appointment with them can be helpful. Together with the neurologist, you can then make decisions about your medical care.

Diagnosing your MS

As most people with MS already know, getting a diagnosis of MS is not simple – there is more to it than just having a blood test or scan. An MS diagnosis is made by a neurologist who takes into consideration a number of things including: your clinical neurological history (what has happened over the past years and is currently occurring), conducting a thorough neurological examination (a physical examination where sensory and motor responses and other investigations are checked out), having a good look at your MRI scan and also excluding other conditions that may have a similar presentation. There is international criteria for diagnosing MS which is used worldwide by MS neurologist experts to diagnose the condition.

Prescribing treatments for your MS

Neurologists recommend treatment choices tailored to the individual patient. Long term treatments for relapsing remitting MS are available and generally offered to suitable patients. Treatment for relapses may be suggested (usually intravenous steroids) if suitable, and treatments for symptoms of MS may also be given or referrals made to other specialists.

Managing and monitoring your MS

While medications are important there are other things that can be done. Your neurologist may suggest management strategies including: managing fatigue which can have a major impact on daily life, reducing stress, exercise and eating well and workplace adjustments – these and other strategies can be discussed with your neurologist, MS nurse or GP. MS Queensland also offers a number of valuable resources for managing MS symptoms (please call our InfoLine on **1800 177 591** or visit www.msqld.org.au for more information).

Ongoing reviews with a neurologist

Most neurologists will review patients every six or 12 months (or sometimes every two years). It really depends on the ups and downs you experience with your MS. Each review will assess your MS, review your medication and address any issues that are concerning you. Neurologist appointments will be more frequent when you are being diagnosed and also when there are relapses or worsening of your MS. Call for an urgent appointment if you are concerned. When things settle and life gets a bit more on an even keel you may not need to see the neurologist again for quite a while.

Multidisciplinary MS healthcare team

Your neurologist is part of a team of healthcare professionals who are there to help you manage MS – your GP and your MS Nurse are also good sources of advice. Depending on your specific MS symptoms, your GP and specialists (e.g. urologist, pain specialist, rehabilitation doctors, occupational therapist, physiotherapist and many others) may also be part of your MS healthcare team.

 We hope this answers some of your questions surrounding what to expect from your neurologist. If you have any other questions about MS please call our InfoLine on **1800 177 591** or email info@msqld.org.au