

- MS is a chronic disease of the central nervous system that is most often diagnosed in adults 20-50 years of age—prime working years.
- It is not contagious.

staff?

- The symptoms of MS are unpredictable and vary from person to person.
- Most people learn to manage their symptoms and remain productive.

MS STOPS PEOPLE FROM MOVING.

WE EXIST TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT.



National Multiple Sclerosis Society

national MS society.org

For Information: 1 800 FIGHT MS (1 800 344 4867)

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Today, MS can be controlled

With the advent of new medications, all approved by the FDA, the outlook for continued long-term productivity and quality of life for many people with MS is greatly improved. The use of one of these drugs may reduce the number of days your employee might be acutely ill. This exciting new development changes the face of MS.

Managing symptoms

MS symptoms are often present for a period of time and then go away. This is typical of other chronic, fluctuating conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or rheumatoid arthritis. Medical management is available for many MS symptoms. Your employee will learn to compensate for others.

Sometimes an employee may need an accommodation on the job to ensure work performance that meets your expectations.

Workplace accommodations

Accommodations for MS are rarely complex or expensive. As the "expert" on living with MS, your employee will research accommodations and offer proposals for your consideration.

For example, you might be asked to provide a telephone headset or to schedule brief rest periods. Accommodations are always negotiated on a case-by-case basis and may not impose a major financial hardship on an employer. A mutually acceptable accommodation will enable you to benefit from the productivity of a valuable employee.

- Because symptoms typically come and go, people with MS may not always use their accommodations.
- No two people with MS will necessarily need the same accommodations.
- Some people with MS will never need an accommodation.

Your employee will expect you to offer the same training and promotion opportunities as would have been given before you learned of the diagnosis.

Managing attitudes

The attitudes of others may be the most difficult problem associated with this illness. Co-workers or supervisors may be fearful, overly helpful, or resentful of accommodations. Sometimes, if the symptoms are invisible or have remitted, others don't believe the person has a real medical problem. MS-related fatigue is the most misunderstood symptom. People think they know what it is like to be tired. MS fatigue is unique and can't be overcome by "trying harder." MS fatigue can often be managed with a brief rest period.

Can we help?

The National MS Society offers educational programs, information, publications, videos, and local referrals. Call 1-800-FIGHT-MS (1-800-344-4867) to be connected to the Society office nearest you. For more information on MS and the Society's programs, please visit our Web site at nationalmssociety.org.



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