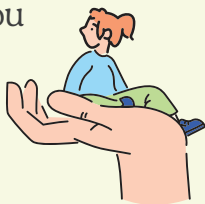


Am I having a relapse?



With MS, you might have symptoms that come and go. This guide is to help you work out whether you are having a relapse, and what you should do about it.



A relapse in multiple sclerosis (MS)

is a relatively sudden episode of new symptoms:

- or a worsening of existing symptoms
- lasts for more than 24 hours
- is not within 30 days of the start of your last relapse
- has no other explanation.

Deal with these first

It's not a relapse if your MS symptoms have worsened for another reason:

- have you got an infection?
- have you been overdoing it?
- are you stressed or anxious?
- are you too hot or uncomfortable?

Infections can cause MS symptoms to worsen.

These could be coughs, colds, viruses, urine infections or stomach bugs.

You might not notice symptoms of an infection.

Take a urine sample to your GP or MS nurse for a dipstick test.

Do you have a question about MS?

The MS Trust helpline can help/answer?

Our free, confidential helpline gives you the knowledge and emotional support to feel more in control of your MS.

Registered charity no. 1088353



Any MS symptoms can be associated with a relapse. You might get one or several symptoms at the same time.

- Dizziness or vertigo
 - Mobility difficulties
 - Problems with balance and co-ordination
 - Vision problems or eye pain
 - Muscle weakness or stiffness
 - Excessive fatigue
-
- Memory problems
 - Pain
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Anxiety or depression
 - Numbness
 - Odd skin sensations
 - Pins and needles
 - Bladder issues
 - Constipation or diarrhoea



What's going to happen to me?

Relapse symptoms usually worsen over several days or weeks before stabilising. After a while, they begin to ease, and recovery can take a further few weeks or longer.

Sometimes symptoms go away, but you may not always make a complete recovery.

Not all relapses need treatment But always tell your MS nurse.

Some relapses have little impact on your life, while others may require hospital care.

You might be offered steroids, either as a short course of tablets or an IV drip.

Steroids can speed up recovery from a relapse, but they don't affect how complete your long-term recovery is.

What should I do next?

Tell your MS nurse if you suspect a relapse, even if you don't think it needs treatment. They can check you for infection and give advice on how to manage your relapse symptoms.

Find out more about relapses here:
mstrust.org.uk/relapse



My MS nurse: _____

Having a relapse may affect your treatment options. You might decide to start or change disease modifying drugs.

Read more here: **mstrust.org.uk/dmt**

Allow time to recover from a relapse. You may wish to seek physiotherapy or psychological support.

Talk to your MS nurse about your options, and read more here: **mstrust.org.uk/rehabilitation**