

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS INFUSION GUIDE

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Multiple Sclerosis (MS), is an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information within the brain and between the brain and body. **Infusion medications, also called biologics, are some of several disease modifying treatment options for MS.** In some cases, infusions of a biologic can slow the progression of disease, decrease the number of new lesions on MRI and reduce the risk of relapses. If you have never had an infusion, the process may seem daunting or scary. The following information is designed to educate you about infusions and ease your mind.

HOW DO INFUSIONS WORK?

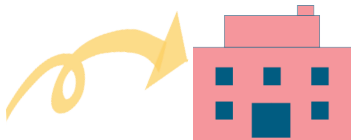


Infusion medications are administered through an IV catheter - a small tube most often placed in your hand or arm. **There are several FDA approved infusion medications for the treatment of Multiple Sclerosis.** Treatment time varies based on the medication, but you can expect to be at the infusion center for 2-8 hours. After medication is administered, you may need to stay at the infusion center for a brief period of observation after the infusion is complete to be monitored for side effects.

ARE INFUSIONS JUST FOR CANCER?

Infusions may remind you of chemotherapy treatments for cancer, but they are also frequently used for other conditions and diseases, like rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, colitis, migraines, and chronic pain to name a few.

WHERE CAN I GET MY INFUSION?



Infusions may be administered in a practice setting, hospital, or stand-alone infusion center. Many healthcare providers have an infusion suite as part of their practice. Free-standing infusion centers and hospital outpatient departments also offer infusion services. It is important to choose a center that knows your medicine's protocol and knows how to handle any reactions the medicine could cause. For example, some biologics must be administered in a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) certified site. **Use NICA's Infusion Center Locator to find a site of care near you.**



DO ALL PEOPLE LIVING WITH MS NEED INFUSIONS?

No, there are medications to treat MS that are administered by mouth, injection, and infusion. Work with your MS healthcare provider to determine the best treatment plan for you.



ARE INFUSIONS PAINFUL OR UNCOMFORTABLE?

Getting an infusion requires placing an IV which can cause some temporary discomfort, but typically infusions are not painful. Some infusion offices allow patients to bring a family member or friend with them to their infusion. *Infusion centers often provide snacks, blankets, wifi and IV warming (where your medication is heated to body temperature) to make your infusions as comfortable as possible.* Depending on which infused medication you take, you could be given medicines by mouth prior to your treatment to lessen the side effects of your infusion. It is important that you report any symptoms or side effects to your healthcare provider.

HOW DO I PAY FOR INFUSIONS?



All disease modifying therapies for multiple sclerosis are expensive. *When choosing insurance, it is important to select a plan with a deductible, out of pocket max, and infusion copay that you can afford.* Some pharmaceutical companies manufacturing therapies approved for MS offer copay assistance programs that can help with the cost of your medication. There are also free drug programs available to eligible patients.. Ask your healthcare provider, pharmaceutical company, or pharmacy about assistance programs for your medication. *You can also contact an MS Navigator at the National MS Society (nationalMSsociety.org/MSNavigator) for help understanding your health insurance plan, selecting a health insurance plan, and learning about assistance programs to help you afford your*

HOW LONG UNTIL MY SYMPTOMS IMPROVE?



Medications that treat MS are preventative - they reduce relapses and new lesions on MRI and delay disability. They do not treat or reduce existing symptoms. It is important to discuss your treatment plan with your healthcare provider, so you know what to expect. *It is important that you do not stop your treatment without talking to your healthcare provider.*

This guide covers the basics of infusions for MS. Always ask your healthcare provider any questions you may have about your disease, treatment plan, or any other general questions. *Infusions, when coupled with a comprehensive treatment plan, can be an integral part of managing your disease.*



The National Infusion Center Association is a nonprofit advocacy organization to provide a national advocacy voice for non-hospital, non-oncology in-office infusion to improve access to safe, high-quality, cost-effective care. NICA aims to improve access to office-administered intravenous and injectable medications through advocacy, education, and resource development to ensure that our nation's sickest and most vulnerable citizens can access the high-quality care they need.



The National Multiple Sclerosis Society mobilizes people and resources so that everyone affected by MS can live their best lives as we stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost, and end MS forever. To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world, and provides programs and services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward.



The Just Breathe Box, founded by two MS warriors, was born to ease the frustration and overwhelming feelings that come with starting a new infusion medication. The Just Breathe Box offers support and lifts the spirits of those fighting chronic illnesses.