TREATMENTS FOR RELAPSING FORMS OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

ACE agency for care effectiveness

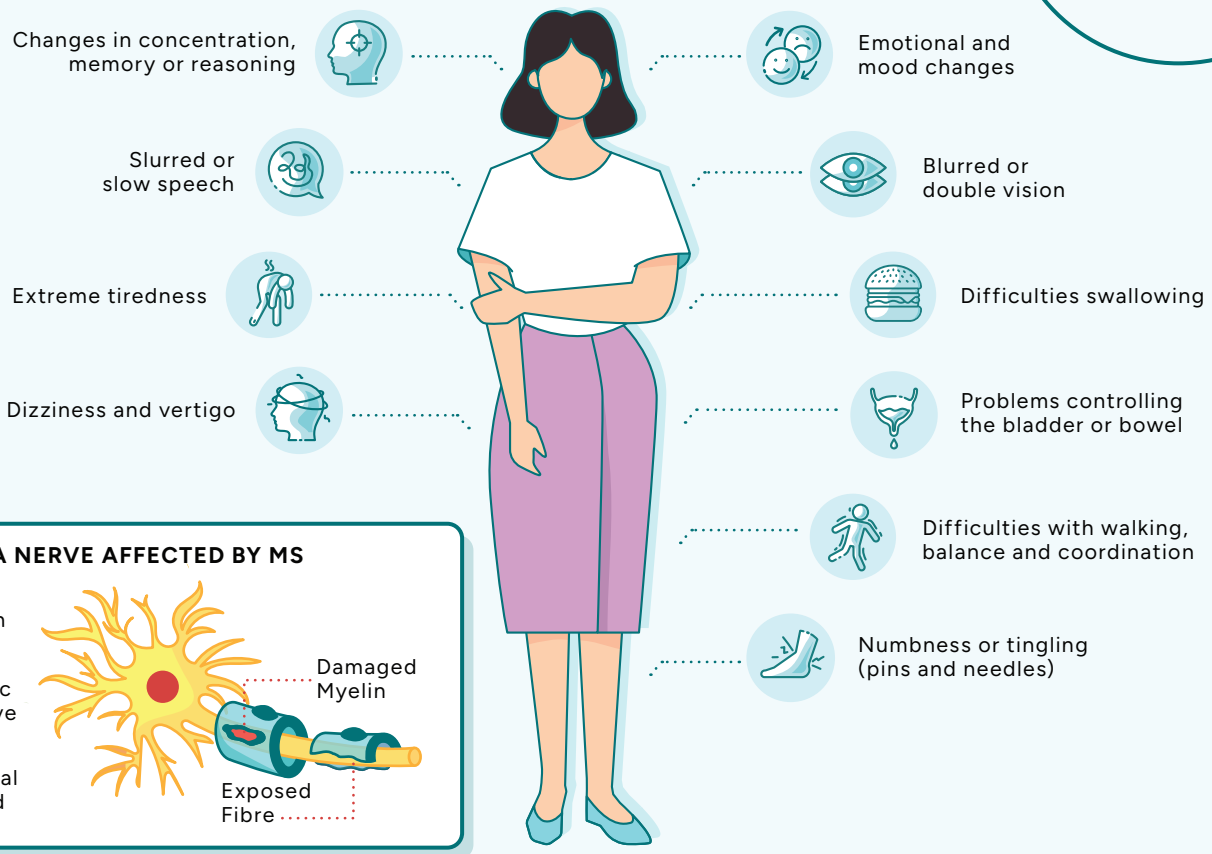
WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a life-long condition affecting the **brain, spinal cord and optic nerve** (central nervous system). It occurs when the immune system attacks and damages the fatty, protective tissue around the nerves (**myelin**). The damaged myelin areas (plaques or lesions) affect the nerves' **ability to send messages** to and from the brain.

MS affects each person **differently** depending on which nerves have been affected. Symptoms can **vary** and may include:

MS can occur at any age and affects **3 times** more women than men.[1]





A NERVE AFFECTED BY MS

WHAT ARE RELAPSING FORMS OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

MS can take different forms. The most common are relapsing forms of MS, including relapsing-remitting MS and secondary progressive MS. It can sometimes take a while to understand which form of MS you have, so your doctor may monitor your symptoms and test results over time.[2]

Relapsing-remitting MS (RRMS)

These patients have episodes (**relapses**) where they have new or worsening symptoms. This can be followed by periods of recovery with little or no symptoms (**remissions**).



Secondary progressive MS (SPMS)

Patients with RRMS may go on to develop SPMS. They may have fewer relapses but their disabilities tend to increase over time.



HOW ARE RELAPSING FORMS OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATED?



Treatments called disease-modifying therapies (**DMTs**) are available for patients with relapsing forms of MS. DMTs can reduce the **number of relapses** and **slow physical disability**. Your doctor will assess the type of MS you have, your symptoms, medical history and preferences to advise which treatment is suitable for you.

Drug name	Approved in Singapore for treating:		How is the drug taken?
	RRMS	SPMS	
Alemtuzumab	✓		Given as a slow drip into a vein (intravenously) or as an injection under the skin
Natalizumab	✓		
Interferon beta-1a	✓	✓^	
Ocrelizumab	✓	✓^	
Ofatumumab	✓	✓^	
Cladribine	✓		Taken orally as tablets or capsules
Dimethyl fumarate	✓		
Fingolimod	✓		
Siponimod		✓	
Teriflunomide	✓		

Key: RRMS, relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis; SPMS, secondary progressive multiple sclerosis.
^Approved for relapsing forms of MS. Interferon beta-1a is not often used to treat SPMS in Singapore.

SUBSIDISED TREATMENTS

SUBSIDISED

- ✓ Cladribine
- ✓ Fingolimod
- ✓ Siponimod

NOT SUBSIDISED*

- ✗ Alemtuzumab
- ✗ Dimethyl fumarate
- ✗ Interferon beta-1a
- ✗ Natalizumab
- ✗ Ocrelizumab
- ✗ Ofatumumab
- ✗ Teriflunomide

*Not subsidised because their benefits do not justify their costs at the price offered by the companies

Treatment costs are subsidised by **40% to 75%** for eligible patients[3,4]



KEY MESSAGES

Cladribine, fingolimod and siponimod are subsidised for certain patients with MS, making them more affordable. The treatment recommended for you will depend on factors such as the type of MS that you have, your symptoms, medical history and preferences.

Talk with your doctor about which option is suitable for you and any concerns you may have. You can also speak to a **medical social worker** if you need further financial assistance for any treatments.

Sources
1. www.singhealth.com.sg/patient-care/conditions-treatments/multiple-sclerosis
2. www.healthdirect.gov.au/multiple-sclerosis-ms
3. ACE Technology Guidance on *Disease-modifying therapies for treating multiple sclerosis*, 2026
4. www.moh.gov.sg/healthcare-schemes-subsidies/subsidised-drug-list

The Agency for Care Effectiveness (ACE) was established by the Ministry of Health (Singapore) to drive better decision-making in healthcare through health technology assessment (HTA), clinical guidelines and education informed by the latest research information available. This factsheet is not, and should not be regarded as, a substitute for professional or medical advice. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare professional about any medical condition. © Agency for Care Effectiveness, Ministry of Health, Republic of Singapore. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this publication in whole or part in any material form is prohibited without the prior written permission of the copyright holder.

Updated: 24 November 2026; first published: 31 May 2022.

To find out more about ACE, scan the QR code or visit www.ace-hta.gov.sg