

Contact Us Toll Free at 1.866.208.3430

Bladder Symptoms

Education

Many MS patients, up to 80% will develop bladder symptoms of some sort throughout the progression of their disease.

Bladder symptoms may include:

- Increased frequency or urgency of urination
- Hesitancy in starting urination
- Going often at night
- Incontinence

A common problem that develops in MS patients is called “spastic” bladder. When this occurs, the bladder cannot hold a normal amount of urine, or does not empty completely. Retaining urine in the bladder puts patients at increased risk of urinary infection.

This happens because MS can damage nerves that control bladder function. Fortunately these bladder symptoms can be managed with good success.

Tips for Controlling Bladder Symptoms

The first step in gaining control over bladder symptoms is to modify fluid intake. Abstaining from fluids and caffeine after dinner will decrease symptoms at bedtime, and lessen sleep disturbance. Voiding the bladder just before bedtime may decrease waking up in the night. It is best to quit caffeine completely if you can manage it, due to the increase in urination it causes. Drinking at least six to eight full glasses of water a day will improve bladder symptoms because it makes the urine more dilute. Your physician may prescribe medication to alleviate your bladder symptoms as well.

Treatment Options to Discuss with Your Provider

There are various options your health care provider can consider for the treatment of your bladder symptoms. The course of action will depend on the type of symptoms exhibited.

Certain medications help with some kinds of incontinence. These include:

- Ditropan®
- Detrol®
- Bentyl®

Other options for treatment include mechanical aids such as:

- Catheters
- Urethral Inserts
- External urethral barriers

This is not a complete list of all options. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms and what’s best for you.

For questions or concerns regarding any of the above statements or recommendations, please feel free to contact Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy Toll Free at 1.866.208.3430.

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Bowel Symptoms

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Bowel problems are often a concern for patients with MS. The most common symptom is constipation, although diarrhea and fecal incontinence can occur more rarely. Constipation can be caused by too little fluid intake and it is also caused by a slow-down in the intestinal tract. Being less active can also cause constipation.

Examples of Bowel Symptoms

- Constipation (most common)
- Diarrhea
- Fecal incontinence (rare)

Tips for Controlling Bowel Symptoms

- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of fluid (preferably water) daily.
- Eat plenty of fiber in your diet. Foods that are high in fiber include: fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, and more.
- Establish a regular time and schedule for emptying the bowels. Do not wait longer than 2 to 3 days between bowel movements.
- Use medicines such as stool softeners as recommended by your health care provider.
- Enemas, suppositories, and laxatives may be used to help a bowel movement. Talk with your physician or pharmacist before using any of these products.

Treatment Options to Discuss with Your Provider

Here are some common over-the-counter medications that treat constipation:

- Docusate—an over-the-counter stool softener
- Bisacodyl—an over-the-counter stimulant laxative
- Sennosides—an over-the-counter stimulant laxative
- Polyethylene Glycol 3350—a bulk-forming laxative

For diarrhea you can use:

- Loperamide— an over-the-counter anti-diarrheal

Talk with your health care provider before starting any over-the-counter medication.

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