

# Contents at a Glance

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>xix</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Part I: When MS Becomes Part of Your Life</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Chapter 1: Meeting MS Face to Face .....	9
Chapter 2: So, What Is it, Doc? Getting a Diagnosis .....	25
Chapter 3: You've Been Diagnosed — So What's Next? .....	37
Chapter 4: Creating Your Healthcare Team .....	53
<b>Part II: Taking Charge of Your MS</b> .....	<b>67</b>
Chapter 5: Developing Your Management Plan to Take Charge of Your MS .....	69
Chapter 6: Managing the Disease Course and Treating Relapses .....	77
Chapter 7: Managing Fatigue, Walking Problems, Visual Changes, and Tremor .....	95
Chapter 8: Handling Problems with Bladder and Bowel Function, Pain, Sex, and Speech and Swallowing .....	115
Chapter 9: Getting Your Head around Problems with Thinking and Mood .....	137
Chapter 10: Considering Complementary and Alternative Medicine .....	153
<b>Part III: Staying Healthy and Feeling Well</b> .....	<b>165</b>
Chapter 11: Paying Attention to Your Health — It's Not <i>All</i> about MS .....	167
Chapter 12: Handling Stress without Giving Up Your Life .....	179
Chapter 13: Coping with Advanced MS .....	191
<b>Part IV: Managing Lifestyle Issues</b> .....	<b>207</b>
Chapter 14: Presenting Your MS Face to the World .....	209
Chapter 15: Making MS a Part of the Family .....	221
Chapter 16: And Baby Makes Three, Four, or More: Planning a Family around Your MS .....	241
Chapter 17: Parenting: It Wasn't Easy <i>Before</i> You Had MS! .....	251
<b>Part V: Creating Your Safety Nets</b> .....	<b>267</b>
Chapter 18: Keeping Your Place in the Workforce .....	269
Chapter 19: Getting a Grip on Insurance .....	283
Chapter 20: Planning for a Future with MS .....	297

<b><i>Part VI: The Part of Tens</i></b> .....	<b>309</b>
Chapter 21: Ten Must-Do's for Living with MS.....	311
Chapter 22: Ten MS Myths Debunked.....	315
Chapter 23: Ten Tips for Trouble-Free Travel.....	319
<b><i>Part VII: Appendixes</i></b> .....	<b>323</b>
Appendix A: Glossary .....	325
Appendix B: Additional Resources.....	339
Appendix C: Medications Commonly Used in MS .....	345
<b><i>Index</i></b> .....	<b>349</b>

# Table of Contents

***Foreword*.....xix**

***Introduction* ..... 1**

About This Book.....1  
Conventions Used in This Book .....2  
What You're Not to Read.....2  
Foolish Assumptions .....2  
How This Book Is Organized.....3  
    Part I: When MS Becomes Part of Your Life .....3  
    Part II: Taking Charge of Your MS .....3  
    Part III: Staying Healthy and Feeling Well.....4  
    Part IV: Managing Lifestyle Issues .....4  
    Part V: Creating Your Safety Nets .....5  
    Part VI: The Part of Tens .....5  
    Part VII: Appendixes.....5  
Icons Used in This Book.....6  
Where to Go from Here.....6

***Part I: When MS Becomes Part of Your Life*..... 7**

**Chapter 1: Meeting MS Face to Face . . . . . 9**

Introducing the Roles Your Immune and  
Nervous Systems Play in MS.....10  
    The immune system: Your body's frontline defender .....10  
    The nervous system: Your body's CEO .....10  
    What happens in MS .....11  
    Taking advantage of the body's natural healing process .....13  
Exploring Possible MS Triggers.....14  
    Gender clues .....14  
    Ethnic or racial clues .....15  
    Geographical clues.....15  
    Genetic clues.....16  
    Lifestyle clues .....16  
Understanding Why Your MS is as Unique as Your Fingerprint.....17  
    Distinguishing the four disease types.....17  
    Scanning the possible symptoms.....19  
Perusing the MS Treatment Menu.....19



Recognizing How Your MS Affects Your Loved Ones .....21  
    Talking about the tough stuff.....21  
    Keeping daily life on track.....22  
    Maintaining healthy partnerships.....22  
    Becoming confident parents .....22  
Minimizing the Impact of MS on Work and Play.....23  
Taking Steps to Protect Your Quality of Life.....24

**Chapter 2: So, What Is it, Doc? Getting a Diagnosis . . . . . 25**

Clarifying the Diagnostic Criteria.....25  
Getting Familiar with the Neurologist’s Diagnostic Tools.....27  
    Medical history.....28  
    Neurologic exam.....28  
    Various medical tests.....30  
    Identifying a clinically isolated syndrome .....35  
Understanding Why the Road to Diagnosis  
    Can Be Full of Twists and Turns .....36

**Chapter 3: You’ve Been Diagnosed — So What’s Next? . . . . . 37**

First Things First: Sorting Out Your Feelings.....37  
    Shock: “This can’t be happening” .....38  
    Denial: “This isn’t happening” .....38  
    Confusion: “Why me?” .....39  
    Anxiety: “What’s going to happen to me?” .....39  
    Anger: “Why can’t you fix what’s happening to me?” .....40  
    Relief: “Thank goodness — I thought it was something worse!”...40  
Deciding on the Next Steps.....41  
    Catch your breath before making any major changes  
        or decisions .....42  
    Have a heart-to-heart conversation with your neurologist  
        about treatment .....42  
    Begin talking about MS with the people in your life .....42  
    Make a commitment to your health.....44  
Facing the Longer-Term Challenges of a Chronic Illness .....44  
    The how-to of healthy grieving.....45  
    Living with unpredictability.....47  
Making Treatment and Lifestyle Choices That Work for You .....50  
    Minimizing the stress of decision-making.....50  
    Getting the professional help and personal support you need.....51

**Chapter 4: Creating Your Healthcare Team . . . . . 53**

Working with Your Physician.....53  
    Finding a neurologist with the qualities you value .....54  
    Establishing a pattern of routine care .....56  
    Making the most of your doctor visits .....56  
    Knowing when to call in the MS specialist.....58  
    Getting a second opinion .....59

Rounding Up Other Key Players.....60  
 The nurse for education, guidance, and support.....60  
 The rehabilitation specialists to help you keep on truckin’ .....61  
 The mental health specialists to help you keep  
 your head on straight.....63  
 The general medical doctors .....65  
 Considering Comprehensive MS Treatment Centers .....65

***Part II: Taking Charge of Your MS .....67***

**Chapter 5: Developing Your Management Plan  
 to Take Charge of Your MS .....69**

Using Multiple Strategies to Manage MS.....69  
 Modifying the disease course .....70  
 Managing acute relapses .....70  
 Taking charge of your symptoms .....71  
 Enhancing function through rehabilitation.....71  
 Providing psychosocial support .....72  
 Taking care of your health.....72  
 Tapping Your Creativity and Flexibility.....73  
 Creating Your Own Treatment Template.....74

**Chapter 6: Managing the Disease Course and  
 Treating Relapses .....77**

Managing the Disease Course.....78  
 Understanding the whys and wherefores of early treatment .....78  
 Getting familiar with the immunomodulators .....79  
 Turning to immunosuppressants .....85  
 Setting realistic expectations for the DMTs .....86  
 A word about primary-progressive MS.....87  
 Managing Relapses.....88  
 Defining a relapse .....88  
 Treating an acute relapse .....90  
 Getting Comfortable with Your Treatment Decisions .....93

**Chapter 7: Managing Fatigue, Walking Problems,  
 Visual Changes, and Tremor .....95**

Foiling Your Fatigue .....96  
 Identifying and dealing with the causes of fatigue.....96  
 Managing your energy bank to help put your sleepiness  
 to bed .....101  
 Envisioning Solutions to Vision Problems .....102  
 Managing visual symptoms.....102  
 Exploring longer-term management strategies .....106

Getting Around Walking Problems .....	106
Addressing the sources of the problem .....	106
Using aids to take charge of your mobility .....	110
Taming Tremor .....	113

## **Chapter 8: Handling Problems with Bladder and Bowel Function, Pain, Sex, and Speech and Swallowing .....115**

Eliminating Elimination Problems .....	115
Managing your bothersome bladder .....	116
Dealing with your bowel symptoms .....	119
Sizing up Sexual Symptoms .....	122
Identifying the changes you may be experiencing .....	122
Silence isn't golden: Talking is the first step .....	124
Treating your sexual symptoms .....	126
Sidestepping Sensory Symptoms and Pain .....	130
Sorting out Speech and Swallowing Problems .....	133
Speech and voice problems: Articulating the facts .....	133
Watching out for swallowing problems .....	134

## **Chapter 9: Getting Your Head around Problems with Thinking and Mood .....137**

Handling Problems with Thinking and Memory .....	137
Defining cognition .....	138
Understanding how MS can affect your cognition .....	138
Deciding when an evaluation is in order .....	141
Knowing what to expect during an evaluation .....	142
Identifying treatment options .....	143
Employing practical strategies for managing daily cognitive challenges .....	144
Managing the Emotional Ups and Downs .....	145
Controlling mood swings .....	146
Getting a handle on uncontrolled laughing or crying .....	147
Dealing with severe depression .....	148

## **Chapter 10: Considering Complementary and Alternative Medicine .....153**

Defining CAM .....	154
Understanding the Allure .....	155
Putting CAM to the Test .....	155
Understanding the role of the FDA .....	156
Sorting out the wheat from the chaff .....	156

Identifying CAM Interventions That May Be Useful  
in Managing MS Symptoms .....158  
    Herbs, vitamins, and other CAM options that go  
    into the body .....158  
    Exercise, prayer, and other CAM options done  
    independently or in a class .....160  
    Acupuncture, massage, and other CAM options  
    performed by a practitioner .....161  
Becoming a Cautious CAM Consumer .....162

***Part III: Staying Healthy and Feeling Well ..... 165***

**Chapter 11: Paying Attention to Your Health —  
It’s Not All about MS .....167**

Enhancing Your Wellness by Paying Attention to the Whole You .....167  
Scheduling Routine Checkups to Protect Your Health .....168  
Making Healthy Eating a Priority .....169  
    Taking MS into account when planning your menu .....170  
    Battling the barriers to healthy eating .....171  
Improving Your MS and Overall Wellness with Exercise .....172  
    Overcoming the hurdles .....173  
    Exercising your options .....174  
    Maximizing your comfort and safety during exercise .....176  
Increasing Your Chances of Success .....177

**Chapter 12: Handling Stress without Giving Up Your Life .....179**

Understanding the Relationship between Stress and MS .....179  
Recognizing Your Own Signs of Stress .....180  
    From sweaty palms to pounding hearts:  
    Knowing your physical signs of stress .....180  
    Anxiety and irritability: Knowing your emotional signs  
    of stress .....181  
Identifying the Major Stresses in Your Life .....182  
    Dealing with the devil: Job stress 101 .....182  
    Handling family stress with grace and composure .....183  
    Controlling the uncontrollable: Managing your MS stress .....183  
Developing Your Stress Management Plan .....184  
    Figuring out your priorities .....185  
    Setting realistic goals .....185  
    Cutting yourself some slack .....186  
    Taking some practical steps .....186  
    Tapping available resources .....188  
    Zoning in on your “MS-free zone” .....188  
    Practicing stress management techniques .....189

**Chapter 13: Coping with Advanced MS . . . . .191**

Scouting Out the Treatment Scene .....	191
Understanding your disease-management options .....	192
Exploring ways to feel and function at your best.....	194
Taking steps to prevent unnecessary complications .....	195
Maintaining Your Quality of Life.....	197
Holding on to what's important to you .....	197
Stay in touch: Preserving your connections with other people .....	198
Establishing goals and enjoying the satisfaction of meeting them .....	198
Keeping your self-image well-polished .....	199
Finding your "MS-free zone" .....	199
Helping yourself by helping someone else .....	200
Discovering Long-Term Care Services (Just In Case).....	201
Defining long-term care .....	201
Getting help in your home .....	202
Looking into adult day care .....	203
Identifying assisted living options .....	204
Considering nursing home care .....	204
Important Tips for Caregivers .....	205

***Part IV: Managing Lifestyle Issues* . . . . .207****Chapter 14: Presenting Your MS Face to the World . . . . .209**

Explaining Your MS to Others.....	209
Providing the basics.....	210
Dealing with common reactions.....	211
Remembering that MS is part of you but not all of you .....	214
Disclosing Your Diagnosis to a Prospective Partner .....	215
Communicating Your Needs .....	218
Giving clear messages.....	218
Staking out your independence.....	219
P.S. The doctor can't read your mind either .....	220

**Chapter 15: Making MS a Part of the Family . . . . .221**

Addressing Your Family Members' Feelings about Your Diagnosis.....	221
Communicating Effectively with Adult Family Members .....	223
Recognizing communication barriers.....	223
Getting the ball rolling toward more open communication.....	224
Keeping the Family Rhythm Going so Your MS Doesn't Steal the Show .....	227
Coping with the direct and indirect costs.....	228
Managing energy and time .....	228
Establishing family priorities.....	230
Problem-solving: Many heads are better than one .....	230

Building and Maintaining Healthy Partner Relationships.....231  
 Making time for each other .....231  
 Keeping the intimacy alive .....232  
 Maintaining a balanced partnership.....233  
 What to do when one partner can't participate  
     in joint activities .....233  
 Turning a caregiving relationship into a care partnership .....234  
 When Your Child Has MS.....235  
     Helping your adult child with MS.....235  
     Young children and teens get MS too .....237

**Chapter 16: And Baby Makes Three, Four, or More:**

**Planning a Family around Your MS .....241**

MS and Babies: Here's the Good News!.....241  
     Fertility isn't affected by MS .....242  
     Pregnancy hormones reduce disease activity.....242  
     Pregnancies don't increase a woman's long-term  
         disability level .....243  
     Childbirth isn't a piece of cake for anyone but women  
         with MS do just fine .....243  
     Parents with MS have healthy babies.....244  
     Breastfeeding is definitely an option .....244  
 Considering Key Issues when Making Family-Planning Decisions.....245  
     Minding your medications .....245  
     Remembering that babies don't stay babies very long.....246  
     Facing the uncertainties: The future doesn't come  
         with guarantees.....247  
 Strategies for Smart Decision-Making.....247  
     Consult your MS doctor .....247  
     Evaluate your financial situation.....248  
     Take a good look at your teamwork.....248  
     Check out your support network.....249  
     Have a heart-to-heart with your partner .....249  
     Talk to other parents living with MS.....249  
     Remember that your plans can change.....250

**Chapter 17: Parenting: It Wasn't Easy *Before* You Had MS! .....251**

Keeping the Communication Lines Open.....252  
     Telling the kids about your MS makes good sense .....252  
     Sharing info with your children when secrecy is important .....254  
     Finding ways to broach the big issues .....255  
     Explaining those pesky invisible symptoms .....256  
 Parenting around Your MS Symptoms.....258  
     "I'm so tired that I'm in bed before they are!" .....258  
     "How can I be a good dad if I can't even play ball?" .....259  
     "How can I discipline 'em if I can't catch 'em?" .....261

Employing Effective Parenting Strategies .....	262
Call a spade a spade: Let MS take the blame when it needs to .....	262
Polish up your creativity and flexibility .....	262
Call on your support network.....	263
Remember, MS isn't always to blame —	
other people's teenagers are a pain too .....	263
Handle little problems before they get bigger .....	264
Allow kids to be kids .....	265

## ***Part V: Creating Your Safety Nets* .....267**

### **Chapter 18: Keeping Your Place in the Workforce .....269**

Understanding the High Rate of Unemployment in MS.....	269
Counting the Reasons to Keep on Truckin' .....	270
Speed Bumps Ahead: Recognizing the Job-Related Challenges.....	271
When symptoms get in the way .....	271
When attitudes get in the way .....	272
Knowing Your Rights under the ADA.....	275
Disclosing your MS in the workplace.....	275
Understanding the terms used in the law .....	277
Requesting reasonable accommodations .....	278
Calling in the EEOC .....	279
Thinking about Leaving Your Job .....	280
Exhausting your short-term leave options .....	280
Looking into long-term disability options .....	280
Making the choices that are right for you.....	282

### **Chapter 19: Getting a Grip on Insurance .....283**

Considering Your Health Insurance Options —	
It's All about Eligibility.....	283
Employment-based insurance programs .....	284
Public health insurance programs .....	284
Self-employment options.....	285
Options if you don't have health insurance.....	285
Keeping a Tight Hold on Your Health Insurance .....	286
Continuing coverage with COBRA.....	286
Protecting your coverage with HIPAA .....	289
Seeing COBRA and HIPAA work as a team .....	290
Understanding the Ins and Outs of Your Health Insurance Plan .....	290
Filing Successful Insurance Appeals.....	292
Step 1: Check your coverage.....	292
Step 2: Confirm why coverage was denied or	
was less than expected .....	292
Step 3: File an appeal .....	293

Replacing Your Income with Disability Insurance .....	293
Commercial disability insurance.....	294
Public disability insurance: SSDI.....	295
A Brief Word about Life and Long-Term Care Insurance.....	296
<b>Chapter 20: Planning for a Future with MS .....</b>	<b>297</b>
Preparing for the Worst While Hoping for the Best.....	297
Facing those scary “what-ifs?” .....	298
Taking charge of your future.....	298
Navigating the Planning Process: It’s as Easy as One, Two, Three.....	300
Where are you now?.....	300
What might the future bring?.....	303
What can you do now to be ready?.....	306
 <b>Part VI: The Part of Tens .....</b>	 <b>309</b>
<b>Chapter 21: Ten Must-Do’s for Living with MS .....</b>	<b>311</b>
Educate Yourself about MS.....	311
Work with Your Neurologist.....	312
Start Treatment Early .....	312
Make MS a Part of the Family .....	312
Develop Your Support Network .....	313
Plan for the Future .....	313
Feel Healthy and Well .....	313
Create Your Tool Chest.....	314
Monitor Your Mood.....	314
Keep Your Sense of Humor Well-Oiled.....	314
 <b>Chapter 22: Ten MS Myths Debunked .....</b>	 <b>315</b>
MS is Fatal .....	315
Everyone Eventually Needs a Wheelchair .....	315
Because There’s No Cure, There’s Nothing You Can Do about Your MS.....	316
People with MS Can’t Handle Stress .....	316
People with MS Shouldn’t Have Children .....	317
“Natural” Treatments Are Safer.....	317
No One Can Understand How You Feel .....	317
Having a Relapse Means Your Medication Isn’t Working.....	318
Scientists Aren’t Making Any Progress.....	318
If You Can’t Walk, Your Life Is Over.....	318

<b>Chapter 23: Ten Tips for Trouble-Free Travel</b> .....	<b>319</b>
Tap the Right Resources .....	319
Calm Your Medical Concerns .....	320
Save Energy for the Fun Stuff.....	320
Check Ahead for Accessibility.....	320
Rent Accessible Vehicles.....	321
Keep Your Cool.....	321
Navigate Air Travel with Confidence.....	321
Safely Pack Your Prescriptions.....	322
Get Vaccinated.....	322
Look for Adventure.....	322
<b>Part VII: Appendixes</b> .....	<b>323</b>
<b>Appendix A: Glossary</b> .....	<b>325</b>
<b>Appendix B: Additional Resources</b> .....	<b>339</b>
Reading Other Books about MS .....	339
Finding Helpful Information Online .....	341
General information sites .....	342
Assistive technology sites.....	342
Government sites .....	343
Organizations and services.....	343
Chat rooms and bulletin boards.....	344
<b>Appendix C: Medications Commonly Used in MS</b> .....	<b>345</b>
<b>Index</b> .....	<b>349</b>