



MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS)

A disease affecting the central nervous system that results in muscle weakness and loss of mobility

Multiple Sclerosis causes the myelin sheath, a tissue that protects the nerve fibers of the brain and spinal cord, to incur damage and scarring, leading to the loss of “insulation” of the nerves and impairment of transmission of signals to the brain.

Symptoms:

- Localized muscle weakness
- Spasms
- Vertigo
- Bladder and bowel problems
- Numbness
- Loss of vision or double vision
- Tingling
- Fatigue

DO:

- Take proper medication.
- Get regular check-ups.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Get the support of loved ones.
- Join a support group.
- Stay positive.
- Seek out alternative ways of coping such as acupuncture, yoga, massage, meditation, etc.

DON'T:

- Don't bottle up emotions. Consider sharing your experiences and difficulties with your family or support group.

OSTEOPOROSIS

Loss of calcium and phosphorous from the bones that leads to their porosity

With age, calcium and phosphorus are lost at a faster rate than they can be replenished. This causes the bones to lose density and become porous (full of gaps and holes like a sponge), making them susceptible to fractures. Commonly affecting the wrists, spine and hips, osteoporosis affects four times as many women as men, and can lead to pain, suffering or disability. Diet plays a major role when it comes to this disease. Lack of calcium and inactivity raise the risk of bone loss. In addition, being underweight, being small framed, being light-skinned, having certain medical conditions (hormonal deficiency), using corticosteroids or thyroid replacement hormones, and extended periods of bed rest are also to blame.

Symptoms:

- Pain in the lower back
- Loss of height
- A “*dowager's hump*” or a severely bent posture
- Bones, especially the wrists, hips and spine, that easily break or fracture

DO:

- Get regular bone density checks since this disease shows up on x-rays only after 30% of bone mass are lost.
- Eat a healthy diet that is rich in calcium.
- Take supplements to replace lost calcium and vitamin D to help the body's calcium absorption.
- Stay active and exercise regularly with weights, low impact aerobics, walking, dancing and running.
- Some women benefit from hormone replacement therapy (HRT) right after menopause, as this slows down the rate of bone loss.

DON'T:

- Don't participate in strenuous activity which may pose the threat of bone injury.
- Don't drink too much alcohol.
- Don't smoke. Otherwise, quit.