

HOW THE MSA TRUST HELPS



The MSA Trust was formed in 1997 and our vision is a world free of MSA.

We are committed to making this happen by researching MSA to increase understanding, improve diagnosis and ultimately to find a cure.

We also work to support those affected by MSA, their carers, family and friends throughout the journey. We do this by providing:

- Specialist Nurse helpline via telephone or email
- Information and fact sheets covering various aspects of life with MSA
- A network of local Support Groups located around the UK
- Accurate up-to-date information through 'MSA News', our regular magazine, and through our website
- A supportive online forum
- Education and support to health and care professionals working with people with MSA

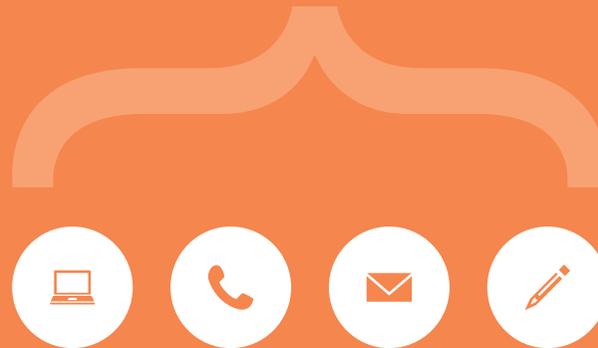
The MSA Trust is funded entirely by voluntary donations and all our services are offered free.



Multiple System Atrophy Trust

Information, support, education and research

To register with the Trust please visit our website, telephone, email or write to us:



msatrust.org.uk/register-now

T: 020 7940 4666 | **E:** office@msatrust.org.uk
Southbank House, Black Prince Rd, London, SE1 7SJ

Registered charity: 1137652 | Registered in England as Company: 7302036



AN INTRODUCTION TO MULTIPLE SYSTEM ATROPHY (MSA)

Multiple System Atrophy Trust

Founded by Sarah Matheson

WHAT IS MSA?



Multiple system atrophy (MSA) is a progressive neurological disease that causes nerve cells to shrink in different areas of the brain. This leads to problems with movement, speech, balance and automatic body functions such as bladder and blood pressure control.

- It affects around 5 people per 100,000, meaning around 3,000 people have it in the UK.
- It affects adult men and women and usually starts between 50 - 60 years of age but it can start earlier or later.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MSA?



MSA affects three different regions of the brain and the symptoms reflect those regions:

Basal ganglia damage causes problems with movement (parkinsonism) and some symptoms include:

- Loss of balance and lack of coordination
- Feeling slow and stiff when moving

- Noticeable changes to your handwriting

Damage to the cerebellum causes poor co-ordination and balance leading to symptoms that include:

- Feeling clumsy or dropping things
- Feeling unsteady in crowds
- Unable to balance without support
- Slurred speech

Damage to the brain stem causes autonomic problems leading to symptoms that include:

- Erectile dysfunction in men
- Bladder problems such as urgency, frequency incomplete bladder emptying
- Feeling dizzy or fainting related to blood pressure problems
- Pain around the neck and shoulders



HOW IS MSA DIAGNOSED?



Diagnosis of MSA is a clinical one and depends upon a neurologist recognising a combination of symptoms and signs.

In its early stages it is extremely difficult to diagnose as the symptoms listed above are common to other neurological diseases such as Parkinson's disease and Ataxia.

It is quite normal to be diagnosed with another condition before being diagnosed with MSA, this reflects the difficulties of the disease and not the skill of the specialist.

TREATMENT OF MSA



Unfortunately, there is currently no cure for MSA.

Its complex nature means that the best treatment is a multidisciplinary team approach involving a combination of medication, specialised equipment and various therapists to manage individual symptoms.