

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 promoting and supporting research into MSA to increase understanding, find the cause and, ultimately, its cure.

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

- MSA Health Care Specialist telephone and email support service.
- Advice and support with obtaining benefits, entitlements, care needs assessments and related issues.
- Information and factsheets about living with MSA.
- A network of digital and local Support Groups located around the UK and Eire and supportive online forums.
- Accurate up-to-date information through 'MSA News', our regular magazine, and through our website.
- Education and support for health and care professionals working with people with MSA.

The MSA Trust is funded entirely by voluntary donations and all our services to people affected by MSA are offered free of charge.



Multiple System Atrophy Trust

Information, support, education and research

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



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An Introduction to Multiple System Atrophy (MSA)

Multiple System Atrophy Trust

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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 autonomic body functions such as bladder and blood pressure control.

- It affects around 5 people per 100,000, meaning around 3,300 people have it in the UK and Eire.
- It affects adult men and women and usually starts between 50 - 60 years of age, but can start earlier or later.

What are the symptoms of MSA?



MSA affects three different regions of the brain and this is why each person with MSA has individual symptoms.

Damage to the area affecting movement (parkinsonism) may lead to:

- loss of balance and lack of coordination
- feeling slow and stiff when moving
- noticeable changes to handwriting.

Damage to the area for coordination and balance can lead to symptoms including:

- feeling clumsy or dropping things
- feeling unsteady in crowds
- inability to balance without support
- slurred speech.

Damage to the area controlling involuntary bodily functions leading to symptoms that include:

- bladder problems such as urgency, frequency and incomplete bladder emptying
- sexual dysfunction
- feeling dizzy or fainting because of blood pressure problems
- pain around the neck and shoulders.

The MSA Trust is the UK and Ireland's only charity supporting people with MSA. We have a growing membership of over

6,000

members, including people with MSA, carers, families, friends, as well as health and care professionals.



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 Cerebellar Ataxia.

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

Treatment of MSA



Unfortunately, there is currently no cure for MSA.

It's complex nature means that the best treatment is likely to include a combination of medication, specialised equipment and various therapies to manage individual symptoms.