

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, find the cause and, ultimately, a cure.

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

- MSA Nurse Specialist telephone and email support service.
- Information and fact sheets about living with MSA.
- A network of local Support Groups located around the UK and Eire and a supportive online forum.
- 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.
- Regular updates through social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

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



Multiple System Atrophy Trust

Information, support, education and research

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



Multiple System Atrophy Trust



@msatrust



Multiple System Atrophy Trust

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An introduction to multiple system atrophy (MSA)

Multiple System Atrophy Trust

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 3,000 people have it in the UK and Ireland.
- 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 the symptoms reflect those regions.

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
- erectile dysfunction in men
- feeling dizzy or fainting because of 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 includes a combination of medication, specialised equipment and various therapists to manage individual symptoms.