



Awareness Week 2024 Special Edition

e-Newsletter

Tēnā Koutou Katoa. A warm hello to you all,

Welcome to our Time Matters in MS: Awareness Week Special Edition of MS Voice, your go-to place for the latest news, updates, and real life stories from Multiple Sclerosis New Zealand. Grab a cuppa, get comfy and read what we've been up to. Remember to keep an eye on our [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram page](#) for the most up to date information.

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week

Time Matters in MS.

Earlier diagnosis and earlier access to treatment means reduced disability and disease progression.

For further information see our [website](#) or connect with your [local regional society](#).

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Time Matters in MS: Awareness Week 2024

Awareness Week 2024 is here! Time to launch our new 3 year campaign, '[Time Matters in MS](#)'. Running from **9th to 15th September**, MSNZ seeks to educate people about the possible early symptoms of MS so that more individuals can recognise the signs, take action and get a timely diagnosis.

Studies funded by MSNZ show a 4½ year delay from the onset of symptoms and diagnosis. This delay can have a profound effect on long-term [brain health outcomes](#). A recent study published in the Journal of Neurology found that patients who began treatment within six months of their first symptom had a 30% slower rate of disease progression compared to those who started treatment later. These findings highlight the critical window of opportunity for early intervention.

To help you know what to look for, below are some of the [common early symptoms](#) of MS. However, if you are experiencing the below symptoms, it does not mean you have MS. If you experience sudden or prolonged symptoms, discuss them with your GP.

We've heard countless stories of people struggling to be heard and we want to reduce the 4.5 years it takes, on average, to be diagnosed with MS in New Zealand. We're focussed on increasing awareness not only among the public, but also health care practitioners. We have a series of information pieces over the coming months directed at GPs highlighting the [symptoms of MS](#) to encourage the earlier identification and referral for diagnosis.

Experience has shown us that knowledge is power. The more educated people are, the more confident they will be to approach their GP and ask for a referral to a specialist.

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week

MS Symptoms

- Vision changes
- Muscle weakness, stiffness and spasms
- Numbness or pain
- Loss of balance
- Bladder and bowel issues
- Cognitive difficulties

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Early diagnosis of multiple sclerosis can make a significant difference in managing the disease and protecting brain health. Learn about the science behind recognising symptoms and how timely medical intervention can impact long-term outcomes in our Time Matters in MS Awareness Week campaign [on our website](#).

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Our MS Incidence Study in 2012-14 identified a **4.5 year** gap between onset of symptoms and diagnosis.

By highlighting the early symptoms of MS and encouraging people with these symptoms to **seek medical advice**, we aim to **reduce this time**.

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week



Supporting MSNZ

Without the support of amazing people like you, we wouldn't be able to do the work we do at MSNZ. Your generous contributions enable us to continue providing advocacy and information that improves the lives of families affected by multiple sclerosis across Aotearoa.

Why We Need Your Support

Our goal is to see people with **MS, at all stages of their condition, are provided with health and member services to support their long-term brain health.** But as a charity that must raise 90% of our income, we need **YOUR** support to help the voices of those with MS continue to be heard. **YOUR** support will help us address unfair inequities in access to services, health and wellbeing.



Shine Bright in our New T-shirt

When you purchase an MSNZ T-shirt, you are not only adding a stylish piece to your wardrobe but also making a meaningful contribution to a cause that impacts thousands of families across New Zealand. Your support is crucial in helping us continue our mission of providing advocacy, information, and resources to those affected by multiple sclerosis.

Get in touch with us today if you would like to purchase a T-shirt.



Explore Other Ways to Donate

Raising Our Voice To Increase Awareness

He's A Remarkable Individual!

Appearing on TVNZ's 'Good Sort', Graham Walker, President of MS Taranaki declares once again that 'Exercise is Medicine'.

Helping to spread awareness of MS, and the fundraising efforts of all those involved in Bangers to Bluff, Graham takes it all in his stride and smiles with every pedal. We are so proud of Graham and appreciate all his efforts. Watch the TVNZ Good Sort segment [here](#).



Time Matters in MS: Diagnosis for Brain Health

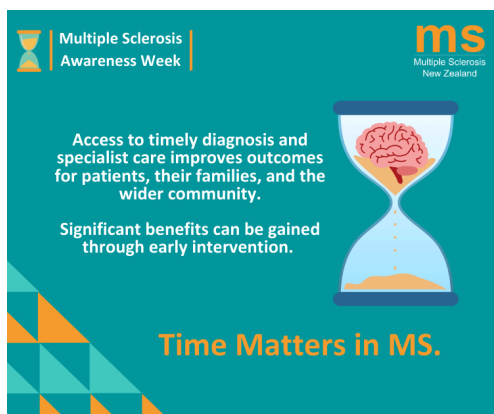
Our article in the latest edition of GP Pulse explores the critical role early diagnosis plays in preserving brain health in MS patients. It's a valuable read for those in the healthcare community looking to enhance their understanding of MS and the impact timely intervention has.



The Science Behind Early Diagnosis

There's a reason we call time precious and almost universally want more of it – using time wisely is the key to making the most out of life and doing what we love.

That's even more significant for over 5000 New Zealanders living with multiple sclerosis, which is significantly easier to manage and treat when diagnosed early. Time matters in MS, and this MS Awareness Week we're on a mission to make people more aware of persistent and unexplainable sensory changes in their bodies, and encourage them to seek medical advice.



Our Gift To You

At MSNZ, we are profoundly grateful for the continuous support we receive from all our donors and friends. Your generosity and commitment to our cause do not go unnoticed.

As a token of our appreciation and to extend our heartfelt thanks, we have formed a partnership with [Gathered Here](#). We are delighted to offer you an exclusive and simple online Will service, completely free of charge. What's more, you will have the ability to make unlimited updates to your Will as and when you need.

Your voice echoing into the future

Write your Will for FREE

Transform lives by improving access to supports and services for those with MS

[LEARN MORE](#)



What's On At The Regional Societies

Across the nation, regional societies are conducting street appeals and arranging events to raise essential funds required to support individuals with MS as well as their friends, families and whanau in their local communities.

Take a look below to see what they have planned. Please consider supporting them any way you can.

[Southland MS](#)

MS Auckland

MS Hawkes Bay



Tune In To MS and Brain Health

In the latest edition, Katie of MS Otago talks about the MS Awareness Week Campaign with Louise from MSNZ. They discuss the campaign's goals and objectives. This episode, similar to the others in its series, serves as a platform for exchanging experiences, knowledge, and actions concerning MS. It's a fantastic source for individuals keen on gaining more knowledge about the disease and the work being done to elevate awareness and aid for those impacted.



MS Auckland's Awareness Week Campaign

Take a look at MS Auckland's Campaign teaser video!

MS affects the central nervous system, which causes communication problems between the brain and rest of the body. So while your brain might send messages to your hands or legs or bladder, the message received by those body parts is actually a jumbled mess. This campaign highlights that while many people with multiple sclerosis 'look fine' invisible and complex challenges are often present.



Information for You

[Get a Head Start with Exercise](#)

Regular exercise plays a crucial role in maintaining and improving brain health for individuals with MS. Engaging in physical activities can help manage symptoms, enhance cognitive function, and boost overall well-being. Tailored exercise routines, such as those available [here](#), can be particularly beneficial in supporting neurological function, improving mobility, and enhancing quality of life. By incorporating consistent exercise into your routine, you can positively impact your brain health and better manage the challenges of living with MS.



[Dorothy Newman Scholarship](#)

The Dorothy L Newman Scholarship assists people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis who are unable to continue in their current job and require retraining or upskilling to enhance their chances of securing paid employment. Successful applicants will be eligible for a financial contribution payable for their course fees with the amount awarded at the discretion of the Selection Panel. The Scholarship is co-funded by Multiple Sclerosis NZ and the Dorothy L Newman Trust.

Application Deadline: 31st October annually. [Read more on our website.](#)



[What's Your Story?](#)

We are always eager to hear and share peoples MS stories. If you would like to share yours, especially details of your diagnosis story including your early symptoms, please get in touch: info@msnz.org.nz.

Share Your Story With Us



Together, Let's Make Every Day More Accessible!

Allied Medical have been a supporter of MSNZ and those impacted across Aotearoa for some time. "We are proud to support MS New Zealand in their efforts to raise awareness and provide vital resources to the MS community. We're committed to offering innovative solutions that enhance daily living, independence, and well-being."

To celebrate MS Awareness week, they are giving away a [Portable Suction Grab Bar](#) - a popular, versatile aid that offers extra support and stability at home or on the go.

[Enter the competition here.](#)



Please check out our [latest news](#) section of our website for the most up to date news and information.

Sharing stories offers an insight into what it's like to live with multiple sclerosis.

If you would like to **share your MS story** with the MS community, please get in touch: info@msnz.org.nz

Your continued support helps us to achieve so much for those impacted by MS. Thank You ❤️

Noho ora mai. Stay well and look after yourself.



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