

# Multiple Sclerosis Action Plan

## What to do if you have new or significantly worsening MS symptoms

### MS symptoms can appear in many ways, including:

- **Weakness, numbness, tingling, spasms of pain** in your arms, legs, or face
- **Problems with walking, coordination, loss of balance**
- **Vision problems**, such as **blurred vision** (especially in one eye which is painful), or **double vision**
- **Difficulty going to the bathroom**, such as having to rush to the bathroom or accidents
- **Fatigue** that is much more than usual
- **Memory loss or difficulty concentrating**, slow thinking, brain fog
- **Speech problems** - slurred speech

### Knowing when to contact your MS provider can be difficult. If you develop a symptom listed in the box on the left, your MS provider will have a higher level of concern depending on:

- **New or old:** Are you having new symptoms you have not had before, or are you having a return of symptoms you have had previously? (We call worsening of old symptoms a “pseudo-relapse” also known as “pseudo-exacerbation” or “false attack”. It is called this because the symptom happens when something has aggravated your condition, like a fever, infection, or hot weather, rather than your MS being currently active.)
- **Severity:** Are your symptoms severe enough that they are interfering with your usual activities?
- **Symptom duration:** How long have your symptoms been going on?
- **Other body stressors:** Are you fighting off an infection, not sleeping well, overheated, on a new medication, or under a lot of stress which could temporarily worsen old MS symptoms?

### Below is a chart with 3 “levels of concern” (Green, Yellow and Red), with guidelines on what to do:

Level of Concern	New or Old	Symptom Severity	Symptom Duration	Other Body Stressors	Action Plan
<b>Green (Low)</b> (likely a pseudo-relapse caused by worsening of old symptoms)	Old	Not interfering with regular activities	24 hours or more	Yes (your MS provider may want certain lab tests including a urinalysis to look for an infection – often the cause of a pseudo-relapse).	Contact your MS provider to report the symptoms, keep well rested/hydrated, manage any illness with your primary care provider, and watch for any increasing symptoms.
<b>Yellow (Medium)</b> (possibly a new MS relapse)	Old or new but mild (minimal interference with regular activities)	Starting to interfere with regular activities	Symptoms persisting for more than 24 hours	No	Contact your MS provider and schedule an appointment within a few days; if symptoms are fading already, your MS medical team may opt to “watch and wait.”
<b>Red (High)</b> (clearly a new MS relapse)	New	Interfering with regular activities	More than 24 hours and not improving	No	Contact your MS provider as soon as possible. Your MS provider will recommend next steps which might include an urgent office visit or other intervention.

If your symptoms don’t exactly fit into this chart, always contact your MS provider to describe your symptoms, and your MS medical team can help sort out the level of concern. Please contact your MS provider and discuss symptoms which concern you, no matter what zone you are in.

### Clinic Contact Information: