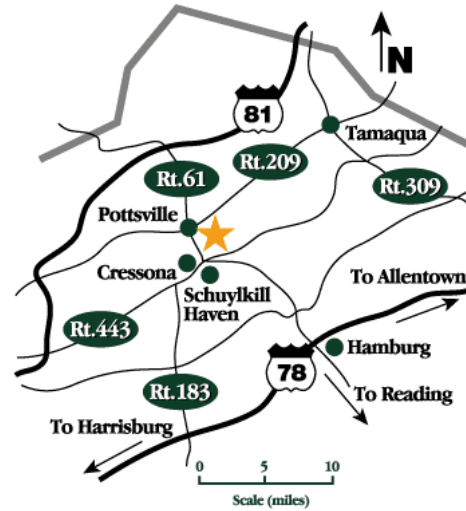


STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this support group is to provide ongoing education and support to those persons suffering from Multiple Sclerosis (MS), and their significant others/support system. The meeting provides an opportunity to talk freely about problems, concerns, and frustrations, to share information and encouragement, provide education, helpful hints, and support. Through your participation in this group, you can learn more about Multiple Sclerosis and get ideas about what can be done to ease its effects on your life.



WHAT HAPPENS AT MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and may include lectures with question and answer sessions, given by various medical experts, review of current literature/ research, and general discussions among members. Educational sessions may include films, handouts, seminars, or problems of daily living. Generally the meetings last about 1 to 1½ hours. Everyone is encouraged to participate at his/her own comfort level.



**Meetings are held on the last Friday
of each month at 1:00 p.m.**

Schuylkill Rehabilitation Center
300 Schuylkill Medical Plaza
Pottsville, PA 17901

**For more information call:
570-621-9500**

**300 SCHUYLKILL MEDICAL PLAZA
POTTSVILLE, PA 17901
HOURS: MON.-FRI. 7AM-6PM
SATURDAY: 8 AM – 12 NOON
Phone: 570-621-9500
Fax: 570-621-9510
www.schuylkillrehab.com**

**Multiple Sclerosis
Support Group**

WHAT IS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS?

Multiple Sclerosis is thought to be an autoimmune disorder that affects the central nervous system. The central nervous system consists of the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves. The CNS nerve fibers are covered by a fatty tissue called myelin. In MS, myelin is lost leaving scar tissues called sclerosis. Myelin makes the nerve fibers' job possible. When the nerve fibers are destroyed or damaged, the ability of the nerves to conduct electrical impulses to and from the brain is disrupted causing symptoms of MS.

HOW IS MS DIAGNOSED?

At this time, there is no single test to identify MS. Doctors need to complete several tests and procedures to make the diagnosis of MS. These can include:

- Complete Medical History
- Nervous System Functioning – testing reflexes, balance, coordination, vision, and checking for areas of numbness
- Diagnostic Tests – MRI, Evoked Potential Tests, and Spinal Tap

SYMPTOMS

- Abnormal Fatigue
- Vision Problems
- Loss of Balance and Muscle Coordination
- Slurred Speech
- Tremors
- Stiffness
- Bowel and Bladder Dysfunction
- Cognitive Problems
- Dizziness/Vertigo
- Emotional Problems
- Headache
- Numbness
- Seizures
- Sexual Dysfunction
- Swallowing Disorders

HOW IS MS TREATED?

Traditional treatments are geared towards improving the quality of life. There is no cure for MS yet, but medications currently seem to slow the course of symptoms in patients. Most patients may need to use medications and other treatment methods, such as Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Therapeutic Massage, or a Gentle Exercise Program. Results vary among individuals and research continues to improve treatment and protocols.

PROGNOSIS

There are four clinical courses of the disease, each of which might be mild, moderate, or severe. The most common form of MS at the time of initial diagnosis (approximately 85%), is relapsing-remitting. People with this type of MS experience clearly defined flare-ups, followed by partial or complete recovery periods that are free of disease progression.

MS is not considered a fatal disease. The majority of people with MS do not become severely disabled. There is no current cure for Multiple Sclerosis, but new medications are being developed all the time which seem to slow down the course of symptoms in patients.