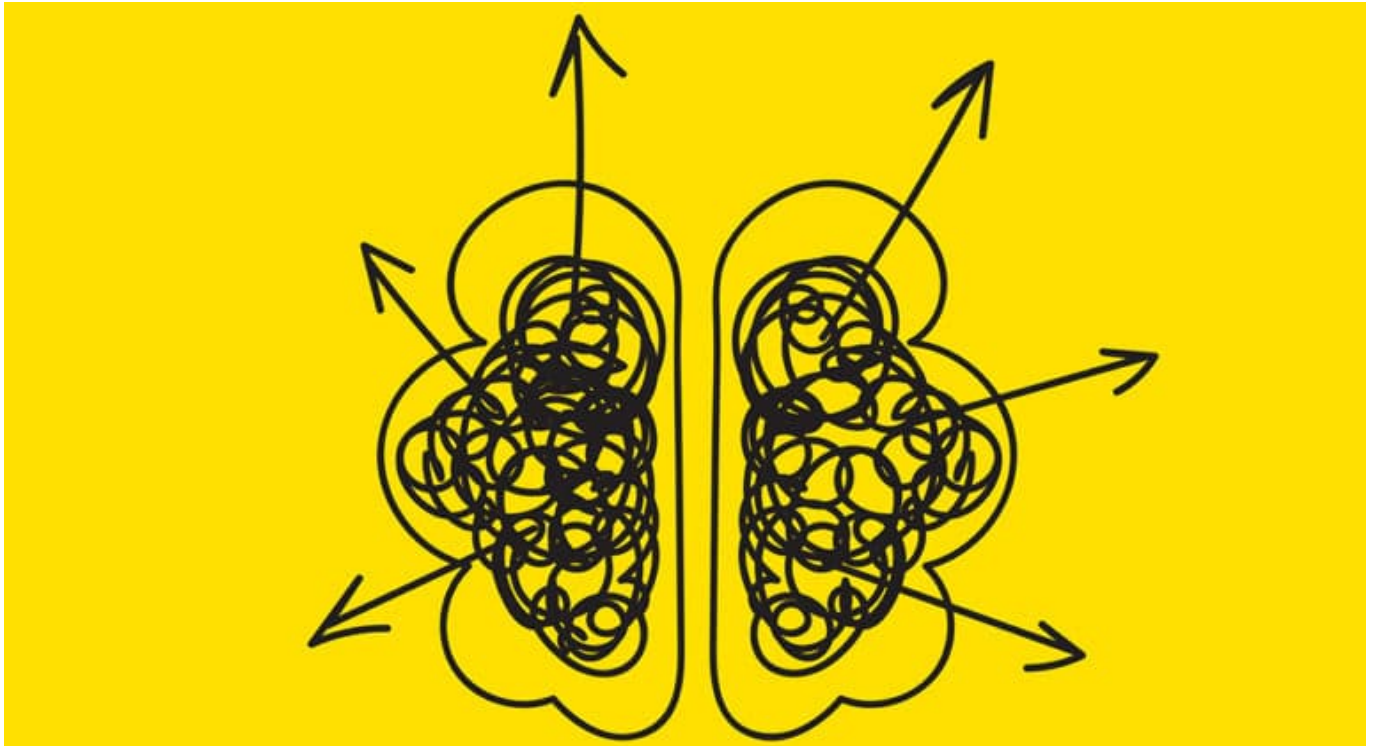


# MS and Something Else: 7 Tips to Manage Your Chronic Disease and Comorbidities



**With MS and many other chronic illnesses, it's not uncommon for someone to have more than one illness or comorbidity to deal with. Lucky us! You get a comorbidity... and you get a comorbidity... everyone gets a comorbidity!**

For me, alongside MS, I have high blood pressure, Hashimoto's and immune thrombocytopenia purpura.

Sometimes it can be difficult to determine if one disease cause the next or if one symptom is the direct result from one disease or the other.

With the laundry list of diseases and symptoms, managing them all can be a bit overwhelming sometimes. Going from doctor to doctor, specialist to specialist can have your head spinning. Sometimes it can feel like you're pointing on a map blindfolded and picking which disease caused what.

Here are 7 tips that have helped me along the way in juggling comorbidities and that may be useful in your life.

1. **Have backups of all the information you get at appointments.** If you can, bring someone you trust to your doctor appointments as an extra set of ears to help you

remember what was said, any questions you may have, and help you explain how you've been feeling. Write questions for your doc ahead of time. Have your person write notes during the visit. Record the appointment, if possible, as well. Having notes of some kind will help you go back and understand what was discussed.

2. **Keep a journal of how you're feeling and symptom management.** This can be a physical journal or on your cell phone. There are even apps out there that specially help you manage symptoms and record how you're feeling. Keeping track helps you see where you're at and can also help you doc see where you're at. Keep track of it all, both mental and physical symptoms.
3. **Keep an up-to-date list of medications you take, their doses, and what you're allergic too.** I even carry a wallet size card that has all this.
4. **Try to using a pill organizer to keep track of which medication you've already taken.** These little plastic containers aren't just for "old people." They can really help when performing a juggling act with your medications.
5. **Use a binder to house your medical history.** This has been a lifesaver for me! In this binder you can put things like:
  - list of meds
  - MRI, X-Ray, CAT scans
  - blood work results
  - insurance info
  - bills/receipts
  - doctor notes
  - a list of doctors, phone numbers and addresses
6. **Keep extra devices and aids in your home, car, or when you're traveling.** With multiple chronic illnesses and symptoms to manage, comes multiple devices and mobility aids to help manage day-to-day life. Keep extra devices and aids in multiple spots so you're never without one. I have a blood pressure monitor, an oximeter, extra canes, and extra walkers handy at all times. I have a cane and walker both in my car and in my home. Also, utilize adaptability aids in the home such as grab bars. I have them in the bathroom and in hallways. After all, I'm a floor catching, numb walker, wall hugger, feet tripper, pants peeing, nerve eating multiple sclerosis superhero!
7. **Nap, take breaks, stay hydrated, say no when needed, listen to your body, and just be mindful what you need in the moment.** Managing all this can be overwhelming and exhausting. Only you know what you're experiencing. Listen to your body!