

@Momentum



Sensitive matters, successful results

I really enjoyed "[Bowel issues? Help is here!](#)" (Summer 2015). I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in October 2008. I am a patient of both Dr. Murphy and Dr. Ayers, who were quoted in the article. Dr. Murphy has been able to help me successfully maintain my lifestyle, thanks to bladder injections of Botox. I am currently working with Dr. Ayers concerning my bowel incontinence. We are planning to do a trial run of an InterStim device [a device that stimulates the nerves that control the pelvic floor muscles] to help my quality of life. This is a very sensitive situation to talk to anyone about, but I am relieved that doctors like these two are around to help. Thank you for your article. I know that there are many others with the same problems I have.

Jonathan Benson, Connecticut

Not always MS

While MS can cause bowel problems, other things can, too. I went to a new doctor who suggested testing for food allergies. I thought, "You can test, but I don't have food allergies." Well, I got a surprise. I was allergic to wheat and gluten, among other things. When I cut out the things I was allergic to, my stomach felt immediately better and I had no more accidents or leakage! I am forever grateful to that doctor and thought other people might want to know that not everything can be blamed on MS.

Teresa Flora, Kansas

Let's hear it! Share your thoughts and comments about this issue's stories.

- Tag your thoughts on **Twitter** [@MSsociety](#) using #Momentum.
- Like and comment on our page on [Facebook](#).
- Email editor@nmss.org.
- Or send mail to **Momentum** Editor, National MS Society, 900 S. Broadway, Suite 200, Denver, Colorado, 80209. Letters to the editor must include your name and a way for our staff to contact you. Letters should be no more than 100 words and may be edited.

Taking charge

I enjoyed the Summer 2015 issue more than usual, mostly because of the article on bowel issues and their management (with very good illustrations), and also the home-exercise report. Both of these topics are especially relevant to me, as medical therapies can only do so much, but day-to-day symptoms (and how to minimize or manage them independently) are the key to better quality of life. Both these articles were informative and gave me new ideas on habits and practices to work on.

Emery Schweig, Connecticut

Exercise article hits home

I am a certified personal trainer who has MS and is currently working with clients with MS. I want to thank you for your article on the benefits of exercise and developing a home-based exercise program ("[Bringing exercise home](#)," Summer 2015). I have seen dramatic progress with my clients who have MS since they have started exercising with me. One client even went from a walker to a cane and is now walking on the treadmill. I believe exercise, no matter how little, can benefit those with MS. Thanks again for all you do for getting the word out about MS.

Kevin Buchanek, Texas

Spirit in the sky

Thank you so much for publishing "[The purple parachute](#)" (Summer 2015). It is so easy to forget that the mere act of facing physical challenges on a daily basis can be overwhelming. This man has, seemingly, an indomitable spirit. What a lovely story. I am so happy for him.

Deborah Levine, California

50 states of Bike MS

I enjoyed the article about Bruce Reid and his quest to complete Bike MS in all 50 states! ("[50 states of Bike MS](#)," Summer 2015). Being a cyclist myself, I'm hoping to do the Bike MS ride in my home state of Iowa, as well as some rides in other states.

Von Ketelsen, Iowa

Booming with MS

I was happy to read in the Summer 2015 issue that the next issue [this one!] will discuss growing older with MS. This is a topic that has been on my mind a lot lately. I am 66 years young and have been living with MS since 1997.

I know MS is a progressive illness and can get worse as time goes on. However, I have been acutely aware that age can have a huge effect on how I feel, which in turn can cause my MS symptoms to feel worse. And because I am a baby boomer, and there are probably many, many boomers out there with MS, this topic will be very valid.

I run a support group of folks who are mainly 50-plus, and we are always talking about aging and MS. I would love any information you might be able to give us. I actually want to start a group called "aging and MS" because I think there is a real need.

Carolyn Green, California

Editor's note: We hope you'll find the article, "[Aging with MS](#)" in this issue helpful! Perhaps you can use it to begin discussions in your support group.

Message of strength

I've been living with MS for over 20 years and use a motorized wheelchair for mobility purposes. (I am not "confined" to a wheelchair.) I strive daily to reach a level of productivity, even as this disease progresses. I currently sell a line of skincare products; I work out weekly at our local YMCA; I am on the board of directors at the YMCA; my husband and I are in charge of publicity for our local art guild; I am a motivational speaker and I am an abstract painter.

I have a message for people to fight this disease and live productive, happy lives in the face of adversity. I also look forward to the day when people in wheelchairs are depicted in everyday situations in print, movies and television. I would also like to mention that I've been happily married for 15 years, and I met my husband (online) in my 40s, and I already had been living with MS for many years. Last but not least, I am also a proud breast cancer survivor!

Denise Veazey, Kentucky

Digital bonus: More letters from Momentum readers

Decoding with data

Thanks to **Momentum** for highlighting iConquerMS in the summer 2015 issue! Your readers may not know that iConquerMS is a patient-conceived and patient-led initiative. It is supported by familiar advocacy groups such as the National MS Society, and the people who

are governing this initiative, including us, are some of the most familiar names in the MS community; you might have even caught us a time or two featured in this very magazine. We choose to share our health data and serve on committees with iConquerMS because we know that together we can have a powerful impact on the fight against MS. The data and research suggestions of people living with MS have power. Please consider this your personal invitation to join us at iConquerMS.org.

Dave Bexfield, ActiveMSers - New Mexico

Stephanie Butler, Just Keep S'myelin - Virginia

Matt Cavallo, MattCavallo.com - Arizona

Lisa Emrich, Carnival of MS Bloggers - Virginia

Christie Germans, The Lesion Journals - California

Laura Kolaczowski, InsideMyStory - Ohio

Marc Stecker, Wheelchair Kamikazee - New York

Insurance enigma

I appreciated the article, "[The changing landscape of life insurance](#)" in the Summer 2015 issue. I had my first MS symptoms in 1988, but was not officially diagnosed until 1997. I applied for life insurance in 2003 and was approved for a 20-year term life plan with \$125,000 of coverage. Since then, I have converted \$25,000 of that coverage to whole life. Because I believe that I will outlast my term life insurance, I applied for a new policy with my insurer. I was turned down, not due to any flare-ups of my MS—I have not been hospitalized and have remained stable—but because one of the medicines I take for cognitive issues (one of my MS symptoms) is Aricept—a medication typically used for people with Alzheimer's disease, so I share a risk category with them. I will always have the \$25,000 of coverage, although in nine years, my term life insurance premiums will increase from \$900 a year to \$3,000 per year. I will continue looking into options since I believe I will live longer than term insurance.

Susan Birdwell, Texas

Editor's note: We're glad you found the article helpful. We'd recommend working with an insurance broker who has experience working with people with MS, and who may be able to help you navigate the insurance industry's complexity.