Who will help me?
A big team may look after you:
- Physiotherapists - help you exercise and keep you moving.
- Occupational Therapists - help you go to school and play.
- Speech and Language Therapists - help with talking and eating difficulties.

How can MS be treated?
Lots of medicines can help but everyone needs different ones. You may use:
- Steroids - can reduce the symptoms of an MS relapse. They have side effects (like making bones weaker) so are not usually taken for long.
- Disease-modifiers - can reduce the number of relapses, but they do not help everyone.

What can I do?
- Tell people if you feel stressed or sad. It may be the MS and it can be helped.
- Some people feel better with "alternative therapies" (like massages). Tell your doctor before starting these.
- Infections can make MS worse so avoid them by getting vaccinated.

Exercising strengthens bones, reduces stress and stops muscle stiffness.

Eat a healthy diet with low fat and lots of fruit and veg.

For more information:
For more detailed parent's information ask for the "Childhood MS guide" from Birmingham Children's Hospital:
http://www.bch.org.uk/ Tel: 0121333 9999

Talk to MS societies:
- MS Society (UK)
  www.mssociety.org.uk.
  Tel: 0808 8008000
  They have a website for young people: www.youngms.org.uk

- MS Trust (UK)
  www.mstrust.org.uk
  Tel: 01462 476700

For young people with MS, or for parents to read with their child.
What is MS?
Multiple sclerosis, or “MS”, is a condition which injures the nerves in the brain and spinal cord. Nerves send messages around your body to help you move, see, and feel things.

How do the nerves get damaged?
The nerves are surrounded by a special protective material called myelin. Another of your body’s protectors is the immune system and its job is to fight germs and diseases. In MS, the immune system makes a mistake and attacks the myelin, and this can stop the nerves working. No one really knows why this happens.

Did you know?
- Most young people with MS do not get severe long-lasting difficulties.
- Most young people with MS live just as long as everyone else.
- Some people do not even need treatment.
- You cannot spread MS to other people.
- It is nobody’s fault you have MS, and you should not blame yourself.

Does MS get better?
MS is always there but the symptoms are not. Most people’s symptoms begin and then get better. Then, they can keep coming back (during “relapses”) and stopping again (during “remission”). For some they never come back. For only a few people, they keep getting worse.

What are the symptoms?
MS can cause lots of symptoms which are different for everyone. For some they are mild, for others they are more noticeable. Some common ones are listed on the right.

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Common symptoms
(most people get only a few of these!!):
- You may feel tired or worn-out for no reason.
- Balance problems can make it difficult to walk.
- You may see double or find it hard to read.
- Your hands or feet may feel numb or tingly.
- You may feel burning or sharp pain for no reason.
- You may go stiff in places like your arms or legs.
- You may laugh, cry or become sad or moody for no reason.
- You may find it difficult to learn new things.
- Your speech may slow.
- You may have trouble controlling when you go to the toilet.

By M Abouyannis, E Wassmer and M Absoud. Illustrations by Feldrai. 20th Feb 09.