GUIDES & RESOURCES

EMPOWERING CARERS GUIDE

الجمعية
الوطنية للتصلب
National المتعدد
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Published May 2026

WELCOME

Thank you for downloading this guide for carers. Designed for people who are caring for individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS) and similar chronic conditions, this guide aims to provide tips and practical strategies to help you gain confidence in your role as a carer.

This guide is part of a wider series developed by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to empower people living with MS and other chronic conditions in the UAE. You can download the whole series by clicking the links below:

- Mental Wellness Handbook & Reflection Journal ↗
- Nutrition Guide for MS & Autoimmune Conditions ↗
- Explaining MS to Children Guide & Activity Book ↗
- Talking About Your Diagnosis: Conversation Guide ↗

ABOUT NMSS

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS), which operates under the Ministry of Community Empowerment in the UAE, is dedicated to bettering the lives of people with MS and their communities through education, advocacy, and contributing to global research for a cure. NMSS strives to raise awareness of MS, establish a comprehensive support system for the MS community in the UAE, and provide resources to those impacted by the condition.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guidebook equips carers for people with MS and other chronic conditions with practical tools and tips to fulfill their responsibilities with confidence and compassion.

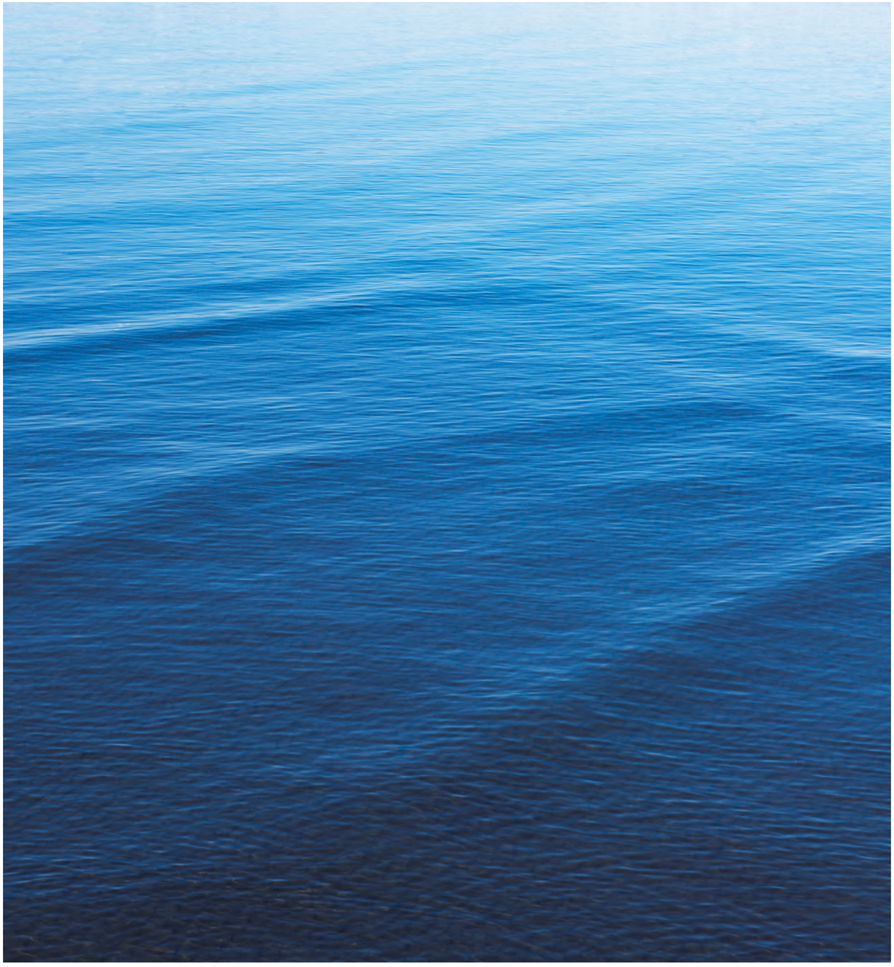
USE THIS GUIDE TO:

Learn more about caring, particularly for individuals who have been diagnosed with MS and similar chronic conditions.

Follow the tips and recommendations to create practical strategies for effective care.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

When you see this callout box, take a moment to reflect on the information and factor it into your care routine.



Click the titles below to jump to different sections of the guide.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please read the following important note before proceeding:

This guide is meant to provide information and practical tools to help you manage your responsibilities as a carer. If you are feeling overwhelmed, please seek professional help immediately.

FINDING HELP IN THE UAE

Reach out to the MS Helpline for support, available daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on 800677.

Find relevant, local mental healthcare services using the NMSS Directory.

For emergencies, dial your emergency line as relevant to your country of residence. For the UAE, dial 999.

NMSS DIRECTORY

ABOUT CARING

This section of the guide provides some general information about caring, including a questionnaire about common responsibilities and insights from the caring community.

WHAT IS CARING?

Caring is the act of providing physical, emotional and practical support to someone who is unable to fully care for themselves due to a chronic condition, long-term illness or health issue.

It involves compassion, patience and a commitment to improving the quality of life for the person being cared for.

Caring can include tasks such as assisting with daily activities, managing medications, offering emotional support and advocating for the person's needs.

WHO IS A CARER?

A carer is anyone who takes on the responsibility of supporting someone with a chronic condition, such as MS, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, or other long-term health issues. Carers are often family members, friends or close relations who step into this role out of love and dedication.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Caring for someone with a chronic condition like MS is a shared journey of challenges and growth. Feeling unsure is natural, especially if the role is unexpected. But by working together, asking questions, and taking things step by step, you can navigate the physical, emotional, and social aspects of the condition, build resilience, and strengthen your relationship along the way.

Below is an overview of some questions you might be asking in your role as a carer, as well as recommended sections of the guide where you can find relevant information and support.

How will I have enough energy?	While caring can be tiring, it's also an opportunity to practice self-care and energy management together. By prioritizing rest and finding moments to recharge, both of you can build a sustainable routine that supports your well-being. Find tips and information about long-term caring strategies in the Caring for MS and Chronic Conditions section of this guide.
How will I find time to do everything?	Balancing caring with personal time can teach valuable skills in prioritization and creating effective routines. By finding moments for shared activities or personal projects, you can create a fulfilling schedule that benefits both of you. Find practical tips and tools for creating a sustainable care schedule in the Effective Daily Care section of this guide.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

It is natural to feel unsure at first, especially if you have taken on the role of carer unexpectedly. Focus on building trust, asking questions, and taking things step by step. Remember that it is okay to learn as you go, as long as you communicate clearly with the person you are caring for about what they need and what you are able to provide.

How can I stop worrying about the future?	Caring for someone who is living with a chronic condition can bring unpredictability, which may feel challenging at times. However, this also encourages open communication and adaptability, helping you both build resilience and find creative ways to manage changes together. Find guidance on how to prepare for unpredictable situations in the Planning for the Future section of this guide.
How can I deal with the emotional stress that I am feeling?	Supporting someone through emotional challenges can deepen your connection and foster empathy. Caring is also an opportunity to explore new ways to stay connected with others. Whether through online communities, shared hobbies, or inviting friends and family to join in activities, you can build a supportive network together. Find important self-care strategies in the Taking Care of Yourself section of this guide.

Caring for MS and Chronic Conditions ↗

Effective Daily Care ↗

Planning for the Future ↗

Taking Care of Yourself ↗

To help you better understand the condition, this page provides some basic information about multiple sclerosis.

What is MS?

MS is a chronic, unpredictable condition of the central nervous system that disrupts the flow of information between the brain and spinal cord. The cause of MS is unknown.

It is an individual condition, and MS symptoms vary greatly from person to person. There is no cure for MS, but early diagnosis and treatment are crucial for improving long-term health and wellbeing and reducing the frequency of relapses. Treatment at any stage of the condition offers benefits, and research is ongoing.

Types of MS

MS may present as relapsing-remitting or progressive forms. What type of MS has the person you are supporting been diagnosed with? Learn more about the different types of MS and how to factor this diagnosis into your care routine.

Clinically Isolated Syndrome (CIS)

Is an initial episode of MS-like symptoms lasting at least 24 hours. It could indicate a risk of future MS development. It's a precursor, not a definitive diagnosis.

Relapsing-Remitting MS (RRMS)

Includes periods of worsening symptoms followed by partial or complete recovery. The most common form of MS.

Secondary Progressive MS (SPMS)

Follows RRMS. Characterized by a gradual worsening of symptoms over time, with fewer or no relapses.

Primary Progressive MS (PPMS)

Is marked by a steady progression of symptoms from onset, without distinct relapse and remission phases.

CARING RESPONSIBILITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Your role as a carer is to provide support that enables the individual to maximize their quality of life. The specifics of how this plays out on a day-to-day basis will vary depending on the condition and the nature of the symptoms experienced, but the following activity provides an overview of some common caring responsibilities.

This questionnaire will help you reflect on the support you already provide and identify areas where additional support or resources may be needed.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Always try to provide support that promotes the ability of the person you are caring for to be independent.

CATEGORY	QUESTION	YES	NO	SOME-TIMES
Personal Care	Do you assist with bathing, dressing, or grooming?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you help with toileting, oral care, or skincare?	☐	☐	☐
Medication Management	Do you help with giving medications or organizing pill boxes?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you track dosages, monitor side effects, or refill prescriptions?	☐	☐	☐
Household Management	Do you help with cleaning, laundry, or dishwashing?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you organize living spaces or handle home maintenance?	☐	☐	☐
Nutrition and Hydration	Do you assist with preparing meals or cooking?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you assist with feeding?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you ensure dietary needs are met and monitor hydration?	☐	☐	☐

CATEGORY	QUESTION	YES	NO	SOME-TIMES
Mobility Support	Do you help with transfers or using mobility aids like walkers or wheelchairs?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you assist with exercises or physical activity?	☐	☐	☐
Transportation	Do you drive to appointments or run errands?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you arrange rides for the person you are supporting?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you accompany them to social events?	☐	☐	☐
Communication	Do you facilitate conversations with friends or other family members?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you promote or help with the use of assistive communication devices?	☐	☐	☐
Cognitive Support	Do you provide reminders for appointments?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you help with tasks, decision-making or managing memory aids?	☐	☐	☐
Emotional Support	Do you listen without judgment or provide encouragement?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you help manage stress, anxiety, or offer companionship?	☐	☐	☐
Socialization	Do you organize social events or arrange visits with friends and family?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you encourage participation in hobbies or community activities?	☐	☐	☐
Advocacy	Do you communicate with healthcare providers or attend medical appointments?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you ensure care plans are followed or address concerns with the medical team?	☐	☐	☐
Financial Management	Do you assist with bills, budgeting, or expenses?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you apply for benefits/assistance programs?	☐	☐	☐
	Do you organize financial documents?	☐	☐	☐

NOTES FROM AN MS CARER

Read the following interview with Dr. Duaa Almasri, who shares some insights from her journey of caring for her daughter who was diagnosed with MS.

How did you become a carer, and how has this role impacted your life?

My daughter was diagnosed recently with MS. Becoming a carer for a loved one diagnosed with MS is a profound journey that reshapes one's life in numerous ways. As a mother, the instinct to protect and prioritize my daughter's wellbeing became paramount, leading to significant shifts in daily routines, priorities and perspectives. It's essential to acknowledge the challenges that come with caring. Feelings of fatigue, emotional strain and concerns about the future are common. Recognizing these emotions and seeking support, whether through support groups, counseling, or respite care, is crucial for maintaining my wellbeing.

What are some of the biggest challenges you face as a carer, and how do you navigate them?

Balancing full-time work with caregiving responsibilities, especially when geographical distance is involved, presents several challenges. I am a full-time working mother and I live in Abu Dhabi, while my daughter is studying in Dubai. Regular communication, such as increasing the frequency of phone or video calls to stay connected with my daughter, helps me monitor her wellbeing and provides emotional support. In terms of balancing work and caregiving, I discussed my caring responsibilities with my employer. My employer offered me extended annual leave, especially when the diagnosis was initially made, which helped me manage both roles more effectively.

Dr. Duaa Almasri

Can you share a moment or experience that highlights the importance of your role in supporting your loved one?	During the initial hospitalization for my daughter, the doctor discussed treatment options. My daughter seemed hesitant, possibly due to the overwhelming nature of the information. Sensing her apprehension, I asked questions to clarify the treatment's benefits and potential side effects. This not only provided clarity for both of us, but also demonstrated to my daughter that she wasn't navigating this journey alone.
What advice or words of encouragement would you give to someone who is new to caring?	MS treatment has evolved significantly, with immunotherapies improving disease prognosis. Many individuals with MS lead fulfilling lives, pursuing careers, building families and achieving personal goals. Staying updated on these advancements can offer hope and inform care strategies.
What resources, tools, or support systems have been most helpful in managing your caring responsibilities?	Managing caring responsibilities for a loved one with MS can be challenging, but several resources and support systems are available. Some invaluable resources have been the MS Cleveland Clinic WhatsApp hotline, as well as family and friends who introduced us to others in the chronic condition community.

FURTHER SUPPORT

For further support and information about how you can help the person you are caring for manage the emotional and physical symptoms of living with their condition, please download and consult these complementary NMSS guides.

Mental Wellness Handbook & Reflection Journal

This guide empowers people with MS and chronic conditions to enhance their mental and emotional wellbeing through informational support and self-care techniques.

Explaining MS to Children Guide & Activity Book

This guide aims to help families and children understand MS by providing suggestions for how to approach conversations about the condition, as well as engaging activities for kids of all ages.

Nutrition Guide for MS & Autoimmune Conditions

This guide is designed to help people with MS and other autoimmune conditions make informed dietary choices, offering helpful tips and nutrition suggestions.

Talking About Your Diagosis: Conversation Guide

This guide aims to provide tips and practical activities to help you explain your diagnosis to family, friends and colleagues.

- Talking About Your Diagnosis: Conversation Guide ↗
- Mental Wellness Handbook and Reflection Journal ↗
- Explaining MS to Children Guide & Activity Book ↗
- Nutrition Guide for MS & Autoimmune Conditions ↗

CARING FOR MS AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

This section of the guide focuses on providing further information about caring for someone with a chronic condition such as MS.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

While this guide references MS, it addresses common symptoms, challenges and caring strategies that will be helpful to review regardless of the specific condition. The focus is on providing practical guidance and support for carers navigating the complexities of long-term care, aiming to promote a compassionate and informed approach to caring.

IMPACT ON DAILY LIFE

Caring for someone with MS means understanding how the condition can affect their daily life. MS is unpredictable, and its symptoms can vary widely from person to person—and even from day to day.

As a carer, your role is not only to provide practical support but also to help the person you are supporting navigate the physical, emotional and social challenges they may face.

- Fatigue, experienced by about 80% of people with MS, necessitates energy conservation and rest.
- Muscle weakness and balance problems can impact mobility, requiring adaptive aids and physical therapy.
- MS can lead to depression and anxiety, emphasizing the need for mental health support.
- Pain and mobility issues can affect everyday tasks like walking, working, and household chores.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Talk to the person you are supporting about their treatments and how they make them feel. Often, your role as carer can be most important in the time immediately following treatment.

MS AND CHRONIC CONDITION TREATMENTS

There are a variety of treatments available to help manage chronic condition symptoms, slow progression of the condition, and enhance quality of life. The primary goal of MS treatment is to reduce inflammatory activity and delay MS progression, while also addressing the physical, emotional and practical needs of the individual.

Here's an overview of the treatments, medications, and strategies available to support individuals living with MS - though many of these strategies are also applicable to other chronic conditions.

Symptom management	Chronic conditions can cause a wide range of symptoms, and there are a variety of treatments available to help manage them effectively.
Disease-Modifying Therapies (DMTs)	DMTs are a cornerstone of MS treatment, designed to slow progression and reduce inflammatory activity.
Supportive care	Chronic conditions don't just affect the body: they can also affect emotional wellbeing. Counselling, therapy, or peer support groups can be an invaluable form of support.
Rehabilitation therapies	Rehabilitation therapies, such as physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy, can be vital components of chronic condition care.
Experimental therapies	Ongoing research continues to explore innovative treatments and approaches for MS. These experimental therapies offer hope for new ways to manage the condition.
Lifestyle changes	Adopting a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise and a balanced and nutritious diet, can play an important role in managing chronic condition symptoms.

Who is who on your medical team?

To understand more about these different roles and to connect to health professionals in your area, please consult the following resources from NMSS.

ABOUT MS

NMSS DIRECTORY

ROLE	DEFINITION	RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS
Physician (GP)	Primary care doctor who provides general medical care, diagnoses common conditions and manages overall health.	• What aspects of overall health require monitoring? • How can general health (e.g., immune system, blood pressure) be supported?
Neurologist	Doctor who specializes in diagnosing and treating disorders of the nervous system, including the brain, spinal cord and nerves.	• What changes in symptoms should be immediately reported? • How can medication side effects be managed?
MS/Chronic Condition Nurse	Specialized nurse who acts as a key point of contact for individuals with chronic conditions and their families.	• How can adherence to the treatment plan be supported? • What actions are appropriate if a relapse or new symptoms occur?
Physiotherapist	Healthcare professional who helps improve movement, strength, and function through exercises, stretches and other physical therapies.	• What exercises are suitable for performing at home with assistance? • How can mobility be maintained and falls prevented?

ROLE	DEFINITION	RECOMMENDED QUESTIONS
Occupational Therapist	Helps individuals develop or regain the skills needed for independent daily activities, such as dressing, cooking or working.	• What home adaptations can make daily tasks easier? • Are tools or devices available to improve independence?
Speech & Language Therapist	Works with individuals who have difficulties with communication, swallowing, or speech.	• If speech is affected, how can communication be assisted? • Are there exercises, suitable for assistance, to improve speech or swallowing?
Psychologist/ Therapist	Mental health professional who helps individuals manage emotional challenges, stress, or mental health conditions.	• How can communication be supported? • How can support be provided during emotionally difficult times?
Dietitian	Nutrition expert who provides guidance on healthy eating and meal planning.	• What foods should be included or avoided to support health? • Are specific nutrients or supplements recommended?

NAVIGATING MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Effective communication with the medical team of the person you are supporting is vital.

Clear and effective communication will support collaboration with the medical team, allowing you to provide feedback for the health professional to assess what treatments, adaptations and other changes are necessary to keep the person feeling their best.

Consult the following tips for navigating medical appointments.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Always consult with the person you are supporting and/or others involved in the caring process before making any decisions related to their health.

BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT

Keep a symptom journal

Tracking symptoms can help identify patterns and potential triggers that the medical team should be aware of. Take the symptom journal and other care notes along to the appointment.

Set goals for the appointment

Talk through appointment goals with the person you are supporting and help them prepare a short list of questions, concerns or specific topics to discuss.

Be the note taker

Write notes during the appointment as this can be a valuable reference for the person you are supporting.

Manage your time

Aim to arrive at appointments early to allow enough time for parking, check-in or any unexpected delays that may cause stress.

DURING THE APPOINTMENT

Be specific. When describing symptoms, use clear language and provide details. Refer to your care notes when appropriate.

Ask about treatment options. Stay informed about new therapies and discuss their suitability with members of the medical team.

Don't be afraid to ask "why?" Try to understand the reasons behind any healthcare recommendations. Don't be afraid to ask professionals to repeat information to you, or explain it in simpler terms.

Seek second opinions when needed. In complex situations, it might be necessary to consult with additional specialists to make informed decisions.

AFTER THE APPOINTMENT

Review and clarify. Go over the doctor's instructions and any information provided. If anything is unclear, don't hesitate to contact the medical team for clarification.

Medication management. Ensure any new prescriptions are filled and that the person you support understands the dosage, frequency and potential side effects.

File documents and schedule follow-ups. File any new medical information, test results or doctor's notes in a secure and organized place. Schedule any follow-up appointments and add these to your calendar.

Emotional support. The person you support may have a lot to process after a medical appointment. Offer emotional support and a listening ear.

MANAGING COMMON SYMPTOMS

Refer to the following table to understand more about common symptoms that might arise from living with a chronic condition and what you can do to provide support in your role as carer.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Have a conversation with the person you are caring for about the best ways for you to provide support. Remember to encourage independence by creating routines where the person is empowered to do as much for themselves as possible. Always get the consent of the person you are supporting before proceeding with any activities relating to their care.

SYMPTOM	EXPLANATION	HOW CAN YOU HELP?
Fatigue	Sense of tiredness or exhaustion that doesn't improve with rest. It can be physical, mental, or both, and often interferes with daily activities.	Encourage regular rest breaks and pacing activities. Help prioritize tasks to conserve energy. Assist with daily chores or physically demanding tasks. Promote a consistent sleep routine and healthy lifestyle.
Pain	Can range from mild to severe. May be caused by nerve damage, muscle stiffness or other factors related to the condition.	Help manage medications as prescribed by a doctor. Apply heat or cold packs as recommended for relief. Assist with gentle stretching or relaxation techniques. Provide emotional support and reassurance during flare-ups.
Muscle Spasms (spasticity)	Involuntary muscle contractions that cause stiffness, tightness, or jerking movements. They can make movement difficult and uncomfortable.	Assist with prescribed stretching or physical therapy exercises. Help administer medications or treatments for spasticity. Encourage the use of mobility aids or adaptive equipment. Create a safe environment to prevent falls or injuries.

SYMPTOM	EXPLANATION	HOW CAN YOU HELP?
Bladder & Bowel Problems	Include issues like frequent urination, incontinence, constipation, or diarrhea. These can be common in conditions like MS due to nerve damage affecting control.	Remind the person to use the bathroom regularly. Help manage medications or treatments for bladder/bowel issues. Assist with hygiene and provide access to adaptive products (e.g., pads). Encourage a balanced diet and adequate hydration.
Cognitive Changes	Difficulties with thinking, memory, concentration, or problem-solving. These changes can affect daily tasks and decision-making.	Use reminders, calendars, or apps to help with memory and organization. Break tasks into smaller, manageable steps if required. Provide a quiet, distraction-free environment for focus. Be patient and offer gentle prompts when needed.
Emotional Changes	Involve shifts in mood or feelings, such as depression, anxiety, irritability or mood swings. These can be caused by the condition itself or they can be side-effects of treatments.	Listen without judgment and offer a safe space to express feelings. Encourage participation in therapy or support groups. Help identify and engage in activities that bring joy or relaxation. Be patient and understanding during mood swings or emotional moments.
Social Isolation	Feelings of disconnection from others, perhaps due to physical limitations, emotional struggles, or a lack of understanding from friends and family.	Encourage participation in social activities or hobbies. Help arrange visits or virtual calls with friends and family. Explore local or online support groups for connection. Accompany them to events or outings if needed.
Financial Stress	Can arise from the burden of medical expenses, reduced income, or the cost of adaptive equipment. It can add emotional strain and impact overall wellbeing.	Help create a budget and track expenses. Research financial assistance programs or benefits. Assist with paperwork for insurance or medical claims. Encourage open communication about concerns.

CHANGING ROLES AND DYNAMICS

As a carer for someone living with a chronic condition, it's important to recognize how the diagnosis can affect roles and relationships with partners, family members, and friends. The diagnosis often brings changes that ripple through these social connections, and understanding these dynamics can help you provide better support.

PARTNERS	Changes in responsibilities, emotional intimacy and communication can be common challenges for partners following a chronic condition diagnosis. Offer a patient and supportive ear and encourage open conversation. Help to suggest ways for the couple to maintain closeness following the news of the diagnosis.
FAMILY	The news of a chronic condition diagnosis can impact the entire family, including extended relatives. As a carer, you can play an important role in fostering understanding within the family. Gently help to educate family members about what the person you are supporting is going through.
FRIENDS	Friendships can be a crucial source of support for someone living with a chronic condition. As a carer, you can help maintain these connections. Encourage the person you are caring for to keep lines of communication open with their friends - but also recognize that friends may not always know how to help, so gently guiding them to offer practical support or simply be present can make a big difference.

CHANGING ROLES AND DYNAMICS ACTIVITY

Complete the following activity with the person you are caring for. The first line of the exercise has been filled out as an example for you.

- In the first column, think of a relationship that has changed or shifted following the diagnosis.
- In the second column, identify what has changed in the relationship. What is the source of the discomfort?
- In the final column, think of ways to turn these relationship challenges into opportunities. This could be finding new ways to spend time together, or different ways to communicate within the relationship.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

While challenges are common as people adjust to new roles and dynamics, relationships can also grow stronger and more meaningful with empathy, communication and shared effort.

Relationship	What has Changed?	Opportunities
Meera, a friend and colleague at work.	We used to visit the beach together on weekends, but I'm not always feeling well enough to join her anymore. The result is that I don't see her enough.	Meera and I have also always connected over our love of films. Instead of beach visits, I can arrange movie nights with her.

NOTES FROM THE MS COMMUNITY

Read the following interview with Dareen Alshamali, a person with MS who shares some insight into the importance of the support she receives from her carer.

How has your carer supported you in ways that have made the biggest difference to your daily life?	My mom has been the anchor in my life since my MS diagnosis. She helps me navigate daily challenges with unwavering patience and love, ensuring that I always feel supported. From managing my medications to encouraging me on difficult days, her calm presence and optimism have kept me going. She helps me find balance in my life as a medical student, reminding me that self-care is just as important as my studies.
Can you share a moment when your carer's help had a significant impact on your wellbeing or happiness?	There was a time when I was struggling to prepare for an important exam while dealing with intense fatigue and brain fog. My mom stepped in with her gentle reminders to take breaks, made sure I stayed nourished and stayed by my side—offering encouragement and helping me stay grounded. Her presence in that moment turned an overwhelming situation into one I could manage with confidence and calmness. I'll never forget how much lighter everything felt just knowing she was there.
What qualities or actions do you most value in your carer, and why?	Her kindness, strength, and intuitive understanding are what I value most. She always knows when to push me forward and when to let me rest. Her empathy is unmatched—she listens without judgment and provides comfort when I need it most. Her selflessness inspires me every day, and her belief in my potential keeps me motivated to reach my goals.

How has having a caregiver shaped your ability to focus on your goals or maintain your independence?	My mom has been the perfect balance of support and independence. She encourages me to pursue my goals while giving me the tools to handle things on my own. Knowing she is always there as a safety net has given me the confidence to push forward without fear. She has helped me adapt to my new reality while ensuring that MS doesn't define me or limit what I can achieve.
What message would you like to share with others about the role carers play in the lives of people living with chronic conditions?	Carers are the unsung heroes—quietly offering strength, hope, and comfort in the most challenging moments. Their support goes far beyond physical care; they bring stability and emotional strength to those they love. Having a caregiver can make all the difference, helping people live fuller, more independent lives. The compassion and dedication of caregivers often go unnoticed, but their impact is truly life-changing.

Diet can play an important role in helping the person you care for manage their symptoms and maintain their energy levels.

How can diet help manage chronic condition symptoms?

Reducing inflammation	Conditions such as MS are characterized by chronic inflammation. A diet rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents found in spices, fruits, vegetables and healthy fatty acids like Omega-3s can help soothe this inflammation.
Protecting nerve health	Myelin, the protective covering of your nerves that is mistakenly attacked in MS, requires specific nutrients for repair and maintenance. Prioritizing foods rich in B vitamins, vitamin D and healthy fats supports nerve health and function.
Boosting energy levels	Fatigue is a common symptom experienced by people living with MS. Nourishing your body with whole grains, lean proteins and unrefined sugars provides sustained energy to reduce feelings of fatigue.
Immune system support	A balanced diet rich in anti-inflammatory food can help modulate the immune system response in people living with MS, reducing the frequency and severity of symptom flare-ups.

For further support in managing MS symptoms and promoting good health, download the Nutrition Guide for MS & Autoimmune Conditions.

This guide is designed to help people with MS and other autoimmune conditions make informed dietary choices. It offers tips and suggestions to maximize nutrition and reduce inflammation by presenting regional recipes with healthier ingredient alternatives.

Nutrition Guide for MS & Autoimmune Conditions ↗

EATING AND LIVING WELL WITH MS

Click the links below to access the different recipes and content sections.

- Samak Meshwi ↗
- Balaleet ↗
- Chebab ↗
- Machboos (Chicken) ↗
- Thareed ↗
- Kousa Mahshi ↗
- Notes from a nutritionist ↗
- Fattoush (Vegetarian) ↗
- Harees ↗
- Stuffed Vine Leaves ↗
- Cauliflower Soup ↗
- A Note About Desserts ↗
- Super Fruit Salad ↗
- Batheeth ↗
- Post-Relapse and After-Treatment Boosters ↗
- Carrot, Pineapple, Orange and Ginger Juice ↗
- Spinach and Apple Green Juice ↗
- Tahini Turmeric Smoothie ↗
- Apple, Kale and Blueberry Smoothie ↗
- Probiotic Breakfast Smoothie ↗
- Vegetable Broth ↗
- Chicken Broth ↗
- Should I Take Supplements? ↗
- Notes From an MS Ambassador ↗

20

21

NUTRITION GUIDE FOR MS & AUTOIMMUNE CONDITIONS

EFFECTIVE DAILY CARE

This section of the guide helps carers keep track of and manage their daily responsibilities, including practical tools and tips for improving physical and emotional wellbeing.

- Tools & Templates for Carers ↗
- Assistive Technologies ↗
- Staying Active ↗
- Building Community ↗

TOOLS & TEMPLATES FOR CARERS

Caring for someone with a chronic condition can be complex. Using tools and templates can help you stay organized, track important information and provide consistent care.

Below are some essential tools for carers to keep track of important information. Ensure that you have some system in place for tracking this essential information.

01

CARE NOTES

A template to record observations, care activities and any changes in the person's condition. Care notes help you monitor patterns over time, identify triggers for symptoms and provide accurate information to healthcare professionals.

02

MEDICATION TRACKER

A log to record medications, dosages, schedules and any side effects. A medication tracker helps prevent missed doses, avoids medication errors and provides a clear record for doctors or pharmacists.

03

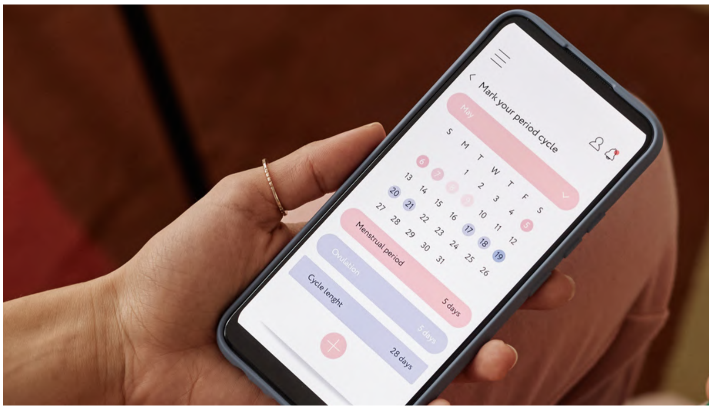
SYMPTOMS TRACKER

A tool to document symptoms, their severity, and potential triggers (e.g., stress, diet, weather, etc.). Tracking symptoms can help identify patterns, monitor progression of the condition, and guide treatment decisions.

04

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

A schedule to track medical appointments, therapy sessions, and other important dates. An appointment calendar ensures you never miss a medical visit and helps you prepare questions or updates for healthcare providers.



RECOMMENDED APPS FOR CHRONIC CONDITION CARE

Here are a few recommended apps to help you manage your caring responsibilities. These apps can be integrated with your personal calendar to streamline important reminders about your caring responsibilities.

MEDISAFE

A comprehensive app for managing medications, tracking symptoms and organizing medical information. It also includes a shared calendar for appointments and reminders.

MEDISAFE

MYTHERAPY

A medication and health tracker that sends reminders for doses, appointments and exercises. It also allows you to log symptoms and share reports with healthcare providers.

MYTHERAPY

DOSECAST

A medication management app that helps you stay on track by sending reliable dosage reminders.

DOSECAST

If you prefer manual tools and templates, please consult the Appendix of Carer Tools & Templates section at the back of the guide.

Appendix of Carer Tools & Templates ↗

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Assistive technology can play an important role in chronic condition care, promoting independence and enhancing quality of life. It can help individuals manage symptoms, perform daily tasks and stay connected with friends, hobbies or interests.

Consult the table of assistive technologies below.

Assistive Technology	**Definition**	**Examples**
Mobility Aids	Devices that help individuals with mobility impairments move more easily.	Canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, motorized scooters, stair lifts, etc.
Orthotics	Customized devices that support or correct musculoskeletal issues.	Ankle-foot orthoses (AFOs), sole inserts, knee braces, wrist splints, etc.
Adaptive Utensils	Tools designed to make eating and cooking easier.	Weighted utensils, talking kitchen devices, rocker knives, non-slip mats, one-handed can openers, etc.
Bathroom Aids	Devices that enhance safety and independence in the bathroom.	Grab bars, shower chairs, raised toilet seats, non-slip mats, etc.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Always prioritize promoting independence and encouraging the person you are supporting to do things for themselves when considering the integration of assistive technologies into your care routine. Always proceed with any adaptations with the consent of the person you are caring for.

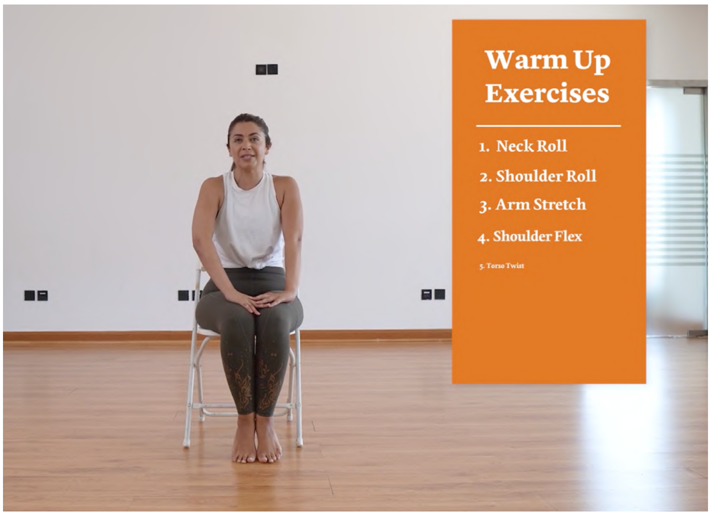
Assistive Technology	**Definition**	**Examples**
Communication Aids	Tools that help individuals with speech or language difficulties communicate.	AAC devices, speech-generating devices, picture boards, eye-tracking systems, etc.
Computer Access	Technologies that promote computer accessibility.	Adapted keyboards, smart glasses, voice recognition software, trackball mice, switch access devices, etc.
Medication Management	Tools that help individuals organize and take medications correctly.	Pill organizers, automatic dispensers, medication reminder apps, blister pack organizers, etc.
Vision Aids	Devices that assist individuals with visual impairments in daily tasks.	Screen readers, text-to-speech software, braille displays, talking devices, etc.

STAYING ACTIVE

Regular physical activity, tailored to the person's abilities, can improve strength, balance and mood, while combating fatigue and promoting ease of movement.

PHYSICAL WELLNESS WITH NMSS

NMSS physical wellness programs are designed to help people living with MS stay active and engaged in a way that suits their abilities and goals. Join a community of peers and benefit from guided exercise sessions from the comfort of your home. Our goal is to support the journey of the person you are caring for toward better strength, flexibility, and overall well-being.



Access the NMSS home workout videos by clicking the link below. You can also browse upcoming activities in your area that can help you connect with others in the MS community and stay active.

NMSS HOME WORKOUT VIDEOS

Check out additional resources provided by the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation, including downloadable exercise booklets and recommended stretching routines.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

What physical activity does the person you are supporting enjoy? How can you help make time and space for these activities on a weekly basis? Discuss options with the person you are caring for and create a weekly exercise schedule to promote good physical and emotional health.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Building a community is crucial when caring for someone with a chronic condition, as it provides emotional support and reduces feelings of isolation by creating a sense of belonging.

A strong support network can also share practical resources, advice and encouragement, making the journey more manageable for both the carer and the individual with the chronic condition.

IMPORTANT TIPS

Connect with others in the caring community

Sharing experiences and building relationships with others who understand the challenges of the diagnosis can provide invaluable support and encouragement. Consider attending local events with the person you are supporting or joining online forums to connect with peers.

Expand your network using virtual meetings

Online platforms offer a convenient way to find support groups, connect with others facing similar challenges and access resources you might not otherwise discover. Virtual connections can provide valuable support while overcoming geographical and practical barriers.

Reinvest in existing relationships

Help to nurture existing relationships by finding new ways for the person to connect with loved ones and enjoy shared activities. Encourage open communication and flexibility to adapt activities to the person's changing energy levels.

Explore new interests and activities

Help the person embrace the opportunity to explore new passions and hobbies that bring them joy and fulfillment. Finding new interests can expand their social circle, introduce them to new communities and provide a sense of accomplishment.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

What are the hobbies and interests of the person you are supporting? Can you think of ways for them to continue to enjoy these passions by attending events or connecting to new online communities?

Explore upcoming events organized by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society focused on community empowerment around the UAE by clicking the link below.

NMSS EVENTS

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

This section of the guide focuses on what to do if the symptoms of the person you are caring for become increasingly difficult to manage in the future.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If an emergency care situation arises, it is important to remain calm and act systematically.

Consult the following recommended action plan for emergency situations. We recommend keeping the important documents and other items mentioned below in a safe, easily accessible place so they can easily be found in emergency situations.

01

Assess the Situation

- Contact the Neurologist or MS/chronic condition Nurse.
- Inform the neurologist or nurse about the situation and ask for guidance.
- Ask if the patient should go to the hospital or if the issue can be managed at home.
- If an ambulance is required, call 999 (or relevant emergency number) immediately.
- Inform other emergency contacts (e.g., family members) about the situation.

02

Prepare for the Hospital Visit

- Bring the patient's medical records, medication list and insurance details to the hospital.
- Pack essentials like water, comfort items, etc.

03

Arrange Transport Home

- Some hospitals in the UAE offer patient transport services. Check with the treating hospital regarding transport options.
- Alternatively, ambulance services such as National Ambulance or providers like Mediclinic Ambulance Services can support with medical transport.
- If the person you are supporting is stable, you can use ordinary ride hailing apps like Uber or Careem for non-urgent transport.

04

Follow-Up Care

- Schedule a follow-up appointment with the neurologist or GP.
- Monitor the person you are supporting for any recurring symptoms or side effects.

Ensure that you have up-to-date emergency medical contact information available at all times. Save these on your phone and keep a hard copy somewhere easily accessible. You can use the simple template in the Appendix of Carer Tools & Templates at the back of this guide.

Appendix of Carer Tools & Templates ↗

SAFE TRANSFERS

It might be necessary during symptom flare-ups for you to physically assist with moving (transferring) the person you are caring for.

Transferring someone with MS requires careful consideration of their abilities - as well as yours. This page includes some tips for safe transfers.

GENERAL TIPS

Keep the following important general tips in mind when transferring the person you are caring for.

- Never lift more than you are comfortable with; do not overstrain.
- Create a strong base of support by standing with your feet shoulder width apart, with one foot half a step in front of the other.
- Use your leg muscles to lift. Avoid using your back muscles to do the lifting.
- If transferring to a low bed or couch, put one foot on a stool. This relieves pressure on your lower back.
- If transfer is a regular part of your care routine, consider using a support belt for your back.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Consult the nurse for further support and advice about safe transfers. Consider training with a physio and/or building up your own strength to help you with the physical elements of caring activities. It can be a good idea to practice transfers during stable periods so that both parties gain confidence in the movements.

SAFE TRANSFER TECHNIQUE

Follow these 3 steps for safe physical transfers.

1. **Always tell the person what you are going to do**

- Before starting a move, count down with the person (e.g., “3, 2, 1...”).

2. **While lifting, keep your back in a neutral position (not stiff or braced), with your knees bent and weight balanced on both feet.**

- Tighten your core muscles to maintain a support position.
- Use your arms to support the person and always let your legs do the lifting.

3. **Pivot (turn on one foot) instead of twisting your body.**

- Breathe deeply and relax your shoulders while slowly transferring the person you are caring for.
- If a lot of assistance is needed with transfers, consider tying a strong belt or a transfer belt around the person’s waist to provide additional support.

NEED SOME EXTRA SUPPORT?

Assistive technologies such as sit-to-stand lifts can be helpful in contexts where transfers are a regular part of your caring routing, reducing the risk of injury for both the person being transferred and the caregiver.

HOME ENVIRONMENT MODIFICATIONS

Home modifications can be an important step in creating a safe and supportive environment for someone with a chronic condition such as MS.

Consult the following table, which includes ideas for home environment modifications that can provide additional support in symptom management and promoting quality of life.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR RENTERS

Most of the tips included in the table below are suitable for those living in a rented property. However, it is important to keep the following important tips in mind before proceeding with any home environment modifications.

Communicate with landlords

Always inform your landlord or property manager about any modifications, even if they are temporary.

Use adhesive hooks or strips

For hanging items like grab bars or decorations, use removable adhesive hooks or strips to avoid damaging walls.

Keep original fixtures

Store any original fixtures (e.g., showerheads, doorknobs) to reinstall when moving out.

Professional assistance

Use the services of a handyman to ensure neat, professional adaptations.

ENTRYWAYS

Clear Pathways	Keep walkways clear of clutter to reduce tripping hazards.
Temporary Ramps	Use portable, lightweight ramps for doorways or small steps to improve wheelchair or walker accessibility.
Threshold Ramps	Install removable threshold ramps to bridge gaps between rooms or at entryways.
Handrails	Use handrails for stairs or hallways if needed (these can be removable).
Lever-style Door Handles	Replace round doorknobs with lever-style handles, which are easier to grip.

FLOORING

Non-Slip Mats & Rugs	Place non-slip mats or rugs in high-traffic areas like entryways to reduce the risk of falls.
Interlocking Floor Tiles	Use interlocking foam or rubber tiles to create a softer, more stable surface in high-traffic areas. These can be easily removed.
Threshold Ramps	Install removable threshold ramps to bridge gaps between rooms or at entryways.

HOME ENVIRONMENT MODIFICATIONS

BEDROOM

Bed Rails	Install (removable) bed rails to assist with getting in and out of bed safely.
Mattress Elevators	Use bed risers or mattress wedges to make getting in and out of bed easier.
Night Lights	Battery-operated, portable night lights to improve visibility during the night.
Bedside Commode Chair	Use a portable toilet for added convenience when the person is experiencing limited mobility.

KITCHEN

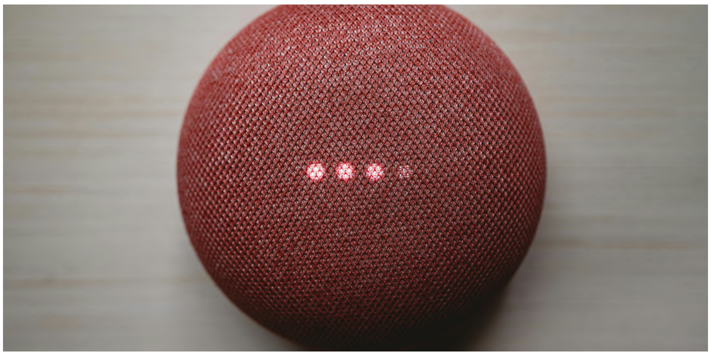
Adjustable Shelving	Use freestanding or adjustable shelving to bring frequently used items within easy reach.
Cabinet Pulls and Handles	Add adhesive or clamp-on handles to cabinets and drawers for easier access.
Anti-fatigue Mats	Use anti-fatigue mats in the kitchen to reduce discomfort while standing.
Talking Appliances	Devices providing auditory feedback can assist people who have vision or memory impairments.

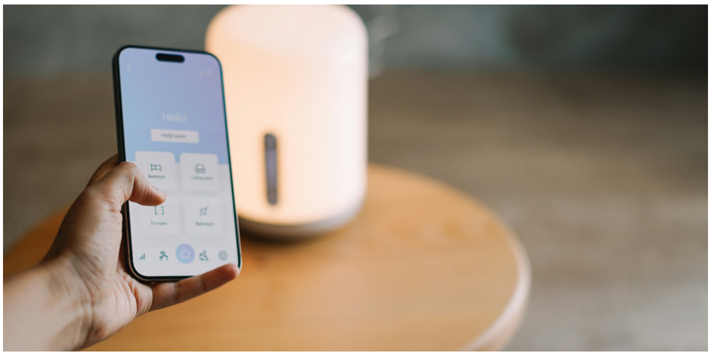
BATHROOM

Grab Bars	Use suction cups or tension-mounted grab bars in the shower, bathtub or near the toilet.
Shower Caddies	Group all required items (shampoo, brush, etc.) in one accessible space to support independence.
Shower Chairs or Benches	Add a portable shower chair or bench for safer and more comfortable bathing.
Non-slip Bath Mats	Place non-slip mats inside the bathtub or shower and on the bathroom floor.
Handheld Showerheads	Install a handheld showerhead for easier bathing while seated.
Towel Hooks	Where relevant, move or add hooks for towels for greater accessibility.

SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY

Voice-activated Devices	Use voice-activated smart home devices (e.g., Alexa, Amazon Echo or Google Home) to control lights, thermostats and other appliances without physical effort.
Smart Plugs	Installing smart plugs enables remote control of lamps or small appliances.





LIVING AREAS

Furniture Risers	Use furniture risers to elevate chairs or sofas for easier sitting and standing.
Cushions and Supports	Add ergonomic cushions or lumbar supports to chairs and sofas for better comfort.
Furniture Anchors	Secure lightweight furniture to walls with removable anchors to prevent tipping.

LIGHTING

LED Strip Lights	Use adhesive LED strip lights under cabinets, along hallways, or on stair edges to improve visibility without permanent installation.
Motion Sensor Lights	Install motion-activated lights in hallways, closets or bathrooms for added safety and to help prevent falls.
Task Lighting	Add clip-on or portable task lights to workspaces like desks or kitchen counters.

HOME MAINTENANCE AND IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Part of your responsibilities as a carer may include helping the person you are supporting take care of important administration. Consult the lists of home maintenance requirements and important documents below and ensure that the individual you are caring for has systems in place for the following important admin considerations.

HOME MAINTENANCE

Can these seamlessly be handed over to someone else in case of emergencies?

- Spare keys (house, car, mailbox)
- Security system codes/PINs
- Garage door codes/remotes
- Cleaning schedules and supplies
- Home maintenance schedules (e.g., HVAC servicing)
- Household utility accounts (electricity, water, gas)
- Wi-Fi details (passwords, service information)
- Gardening or outdoor maintenance instructions (if applicable)
- Smart home device instructions (if applicable)
- Pet care instructions (if applicable)

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Conversations about important admin can be slow and full of small tasks that need to be accomplished, but it is important that plans and systems are put in place ahead of time. This will reduce complications and stress if an emergency situation ever arises.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Can these easily be found in case of emergencies?

- Emergency contact list for healthcare providers (doctors, therapists, specialists)
- Emergency contact information (friends, family contacts)
- ID documents (ID card, driver's license, passport, etc.)
- Medical insurance cards and policy details
- Medical records (diagnosis, treatment plans, medication lists etc.)
- Medication schedules
- Prescription information (pharmacy details, refill schedules)
- Financial account details (bank accounts, credit cards, investments)
- Vehicle registration and insurance information
- Power of attorney (financial and healthcare)
- Property deeds, mortgage documents or rental agreements
- Tax records and filing information
- Will or estate planning documents

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Initiating conversations about powers of attorney, wills and next of kin with the person you are supporting can be sensitive, especially in some cultural contexts where these topics might be considered improper to discuss. Choose a comfortable and private setting for these conversations, and consider involving a trusted family member or even religious figure, if desired.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

This section includes self-care tips and resources to promote stress management and avoid carer burnout.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

Self-care is important for carers, as the role involves emotional, physical and mental demands, and nurturing your own wellbeing allows you to give care from a place of strength and compassion, rather than depletion.

The Seven Pillars of Self-Care represent a rounded, holistic approach to looking after your own wellbeing. Ensure that you are paying attention to all these different aspects of self-care to maintain your energy levels and positive outlook.

THE SEVEN PILLARS OF SELF-CARE

- **Mental:** Cultivating a healthy mindset through mindfulness and curiosity.
- **Emotional:** Caring for your emotional well-being with healthy coping strategies.
- **Physical:** Taking care of your body through exercise, nutrition and proper sleep.
- **Environmental:** Caring for the spaces and places around you.
- **Spiritual:** Engaging in activities or practices that give a sense of meaning to your life.
- **Recreational:** Making time for hobbies, fun activities and new experiences.
- **Social:** Building relationships with regular connection and healthy boundaries.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Think of your well-being as a cooler filled with refreshing drinks. When it's full, you have plenty to share and keep yourself going. But if you keep giving without replenishing, eventually, the cooler runs dry. Self-care is how you refill that cooler. It's not about being self-centered; it's about making sure you have the resources to continue caring effectively for the person you are supporting.

SELF-CARE QUESTIONNAIRE

Take the following questionnaire to review tips and strategies for managing personal stress and promoting self-care in your role.

- If the answer to the questions below is “Yes”, place a checkmark in the column.
- If the answer is “No”, then make notes about one simple action or activity you could do to start incorporating this self-care strategy into your routine.

Question	**My Notes**
Do you schedule replenishing activities? ☐ Whether it is reading, gardening, listening to music, or spending time with loved ones, do you ensure you dedicate time to activities that recharge you and bring you joy?	
Do you set realistic expectations? ☐ Recognizing that caring often involves a long to-do list, do you prioritize tasks and focus on what is truly essential, while learning to let go of or delegate the rest?	
Do you establish healthy boundaries? ☐ Is saying “no” something you are able to do? Do you set compassionate but reasonable boundaries to protect your time and energy, allowing you to focus on what matters most?	
Do you identify and manage personal stressors? ☐ Have you taken time to identify the specific things that trigger stress in your caring routine? Once you understand your stressors, do you think of ways to minimize or eliminate them?	

Question	My Notes
Do you utilize mini-breaks? ☐ Do you incorporate short breaks throughout your day? Even five minutes of deep breathing, stretching, or simply closing your eyes can help you reset and refocus.	
Do you prioritize sleep and diet? ☐ Recognizing that adequate sleep and a healthy diet are cornerstones of both physical and emotional well-being, do you aim for at least 7 hours of quality sleep per night? Do you focus on nourishing your body with nutritious foods?	
Do you engage your support network? ☐ Remembering that you don't have to do it all alone, do you cultivate a support network of family, friends, and community resources?	
Do you stay organized and plan ahead? ☐ Knowing that caring can involve juggling multiple appointments, medications, and tasks, do you stay organized and plan ahead? Does this help you anticipate challenges and feel more in control?	

MY SUPPORT NETWORK

When creating your carer support network, it is important to think of the different kinds of support you might need and build your support team accordingly.

Here are different types of support you may need. Can you identify at least one person or professional who can provide you with each kind of support?

INFORMATION

Access to accurate, relevant, and timely information about the condition, treatments, and caring strategies. Support to help you make informed decisions and feel more confident in your role as carer.

- Healthcare Professionals
- Support Groups & Organizations
- Social Workers

FEEDBACK AND GUIDANCE

Constructive advice, reassurance, and direction from others to help you refine your caregiving approach and solve problems effectively.

- MS Healthcare Team
- Experienced Carers
- Counselors or Psychologists
- Family & Friends

SELF-ESTEEM

Emotional support and encouragement to help you feel valued, confident and appreciated in your role. This is very important for maintaining mental and emotional wellbeing.

- Family & Friends
- Support Groups
- Faith or Community Leaders
- Counselors or Psychologists

PHYSICAL AND WELLNESS

Support and encouragement to prioritize your physical health through healthy habits and self-care practices. This is very important for maintaining physical and mental wellbeing.

- Nutritionists & Dieticians
- Fitness Instructors & Personal Trainers
- Physiotherapists
- Community Activity & Exercise Groups

ASKING FOR HELP

As a carer, seeking practical and emotional support is crucial for preventing burnout and keeping you feeling on top of your game. Sharing challenges with others not only relieves stress, but can provide new perspectives and solutions to challenges. Don't be afraid to ask for help - it is part of your responsibility as a carer to reach out if you feel you need support.

Reach out to the MS Helpline for support, available daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., on 800677.

Find relevant, local mental healthcare services using the NMSS Directory.

NMSS DIRECTORY

CARER SELF QUESTIONNAIRE

ADAPTED FROM PROF. MICHAEL C HERBST

Feeling a little overwhelmed by your caring responsibilities? Take the following test to explore the strength of your feelings and evaluate if you need greater support in your role as carer.

Complete the questionnaire by placing a check on the appropriate response box. Each box shows a corresponding points total, which you will use to calculate your overall score on the quiz.

	Every Day	Often	Sometimes	Seldom or Never
How often do you get a good night's sleep (seven or more hours)?	4	3	2	1
How often do you keep up with leisure activities that you enjoyed before you began caring?	4	3	2	1
How often do you feel irritable or lose your temper with others?	4	3	2	1
How often do you feel happy?	4	3	2	1
How often do you find it difficult to concentrate?	4	3	2	1

IMPORTANT HEALTH NOTICE

This activity is meant to provide a safe and private space for you to explore the strength and extent of the feelings you have been experiencing. It is not intended to replace a professional mental health evaluation. Please seek professional help if you are feeling overwhelmed.

	Every Day	Often	Sometimes	Seldom or Never
How often do you lack the energy to cook, clean, and take care of everyday basics?	4	3	2	1
How often do you feel hopeless about the future?	4	3	2	1
How often do you feel overwhelmed by all you have to do?	4	3	2	1
How often has someone criticized your caregiving or suggested you are burning out?	4	3	2	1
How often do you feel that someone is looking after or caring for you?	4	3	2	1

CAREGIVER SELF-QUESTIONNAIRE

ADAPTED FROM PROF. MICHAEL C HERBST

WHAT IS YOUR SCORE?

Add up your score using this points system and then refer to the descriptions below.

33-40: Maintain Balance

You are managing caring responsibilities well and maintaining a healthy balance in your life. Continue practicing self-care and stress management techniques. Stay connected to your support network and regularly check in with yourself to ensure you're not neglecting your needs.

26-32: Strengthen Self-Care

You are experiencing some light stress and fatigue but are still coping. Take more frequent breaks and prioritize rest. Seek help from family, friends, or professional services to lighten your load and consider joining a caregiver support group for advice and emotional support.

19-25: Review & Adjust

You are showing signs of stress, exhaustion and emotional strain. Burnout is a possibility if changes aren't made. Reassess your caring responsibilities and delegate tasks wherever possible. Schedule regular time off to recharge and consider speaking to a counselor or therapist to address emotional challenges.

10-18: Seek Support

You seem to be experiencing physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. Seek professional help to prioritize your own health and wellbeing. Arrange for temporary care support (e.g., respite care or professional caregivers) and take a step back to focus on your own health and recovery. Reach out to the MS Helpline for support, available daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., on 800677. For emergencies, dial your emergency line as relevant to your country of residence. In the UAE, dial 999.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please consult the following helpful resources for further support in your care journey.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

IMPORTANT UAE CONTACTS

Emergency calls: 999
MS Helpline: 800677

- NMSS Directory ↗
- UAE People of Determination Government Portal ↗

HOME SERVICES IN THE UAE

- Manzil Home Care ↗
- Right Health ↗
- First Response Healthcare ↗
- HMS Mirdif Hospital ↗
- Mediclinic UAE ↗

CARER AND CHRONIC CONDITION GUIDES

- Understanding Autoimmune Disease ↗
- Caregiver Resource Guide ↗
- Supporting Someone with a New MS Diagnosis ↗
- Living with Diabetes ↗
- A Practical Guide to Epilepsy ↗

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS WEB RESOURCES

- Multiple Sclerosis Factsheet ↗
- MS Patient Journey ↗
- Mayo Clinic Explains Multiple Sclerosis ↗
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society (UAE) ↗
- MS Events in the UAE ↗
- Healthy Living & Quality of Life ↗
- MS Focus Lending Library ↗
- BelongMS ↗
- Can Do MS ↗

GET INVOLVED

Are you inspired to share your story and connect with others in the MS community? Share your journey, raise awareness and play your part in building a supportive online community together!

GET INVOLVED

FOLLOW NMSS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

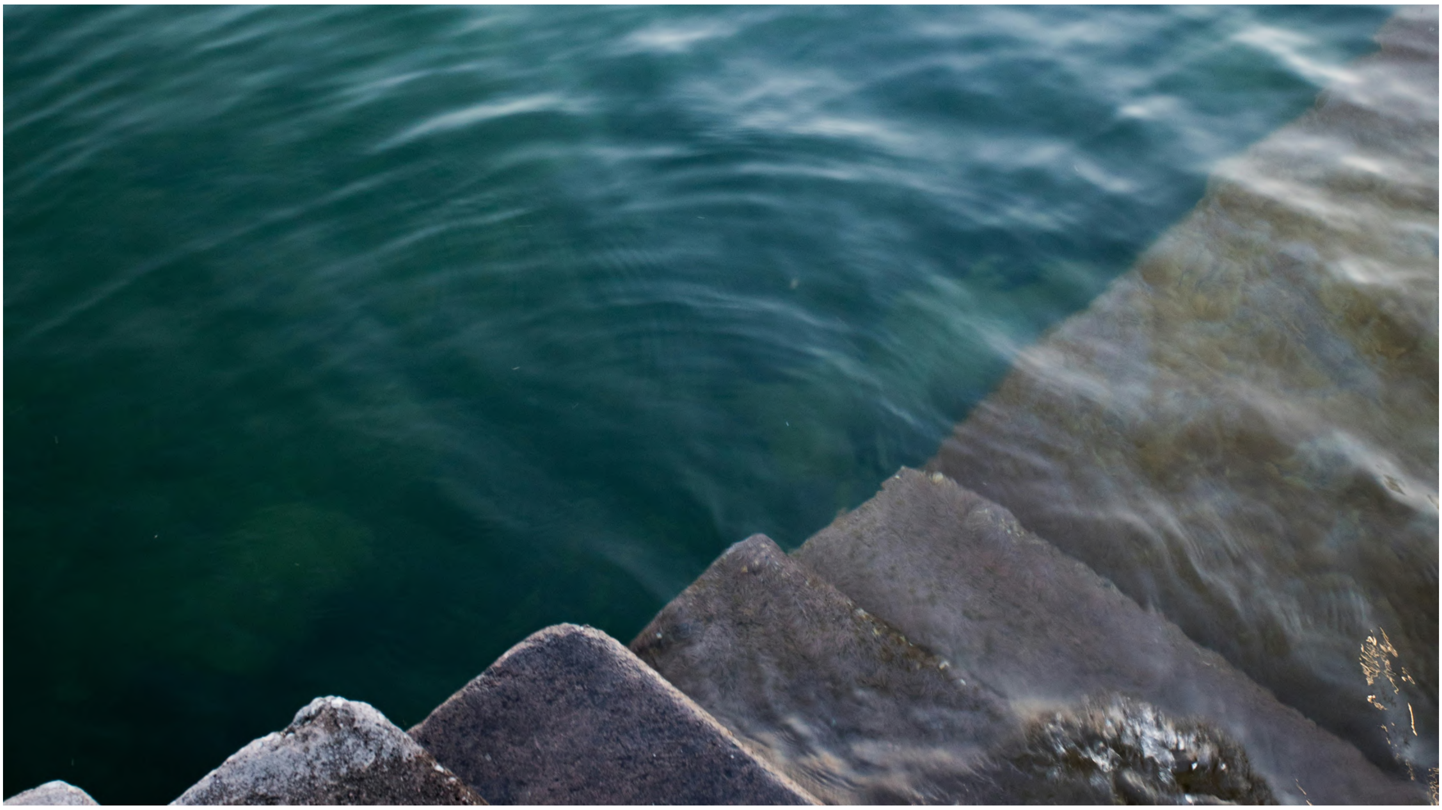
NMSSocietyUAE

National MS Society UAE

National Multiple Sclerosis Society UAE

NMSSocietyUAE

NMSSocietyUAE



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are extremely grateful to the following contributors, whose support was invaluable in the development of this digital guide.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fatema Al Harbi, a social worker based in the UAE, who reviewed the tips and information contained in this digital guide.

Dr Duaa Almasri, a healthcare worker who shared her personal experience of caring for someone with MS.

Dareen Alshamali, a person living with MS who shared personal insights into her relationship with her carer.

APPENDIX OF CARER TOOLS & TEMPLATES

Using tools and templates can make caring more effective. They help you stay organized, communicate clearly with healthcare teams, and provide the best possible care for the person you are supporting.

APPENDIX OF CARER TOOLS & TEMPLATES

- Emergency Contact List ↗
- Care Notes Template ↗
- Symptoms Journal ↗
- Medication Tracker ↗
- Appointment Calendar ↗

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

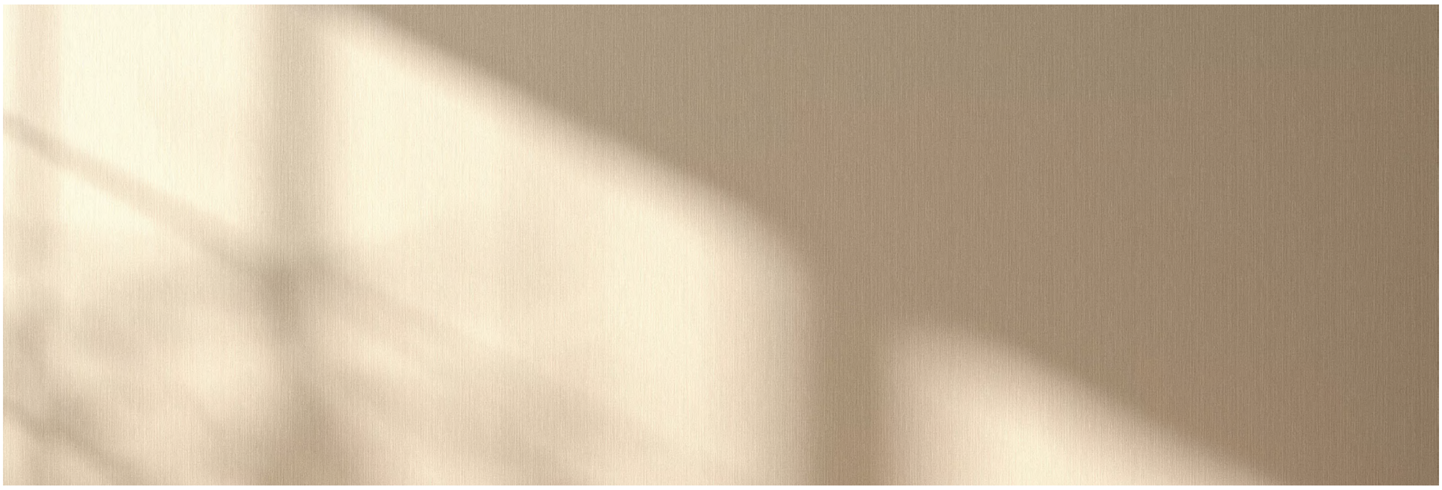
Work with the person you are supporting to complete the following table and capture emergency contact information. Ensure that these details are consistently up-to-date and easily accessible.

MY FIRST POINT OF CONTACT

Name	**Phone Number**
Email	**Other**

NEAREST HOSPITAL OR CRISIS CENTER

Name	**Phone Number**
Email	**Other**



MS MEDICAL TEAM (GP, NEUROLOGIST, MS NURSE, ETC.)

Name

Phone Number

Email

Other

Name

Phone Number

Email

Other

Name

Phone Number

Email

Other

OTHER EMERGENCY CONTACTS (FAMILY, FRIENDS, ETC.)

Name

Phone Number

Email

Other

Name

Phone Number

Email

Other

CARE NOTES TEMPLATE

Care notes are important records, detailing the care delivered to an individual and how they are responding to treatments for their chronic condition. Recording care notes can support the healthcare team in capturing a more complete, personalized insight into the needs of the person you are supporting.

Use this template to record your care notes.
An example has been provided.

We recommend recording notes on a weekly basis, unless there is a noticeable change in the way the person you are supporting is feeling (either positive or negative). If this happens, record daily notes to serve as a record for the healthcare team to review.

Date: 5 March, 2025

Hamda had a good day. Morning routine included medication (oral, 8:00 AM) with a good breakfast of balaleet, followed by light stretching and reading. Lunch was some fattoush salad and vegetable soup, and she enjoyed a walk in the garden and card game in the afternoon. Dinner consisted of baked fish and vegetables, with medication (oral, 8:00 PM) administered straight afterwards. Hamda expressed some anxiety about tomorrow's doctor's appointment, which was addressed with reassurance and conversation about the appointment goals.
No new complaints of pain, her appetite was good throughout the day and mood was mostly positive and engaged.

Date:

Date:

Date:

Date:

SYMPTOMS JOURNAL

Use this table to keep track of symptoms and prepare questions for the medical team.

PAIN

Persistent pain and discomfort can lead to feelings of frustration, irritability and even hopelessness.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

FATIGUE

Feeling exhausted makes it difficult to summon the motivation to be physically or mentally active.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

MOBILITY LIMITATIONS

Restrictions on movement and independence can trigger a sense of loss and sadness.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

BLADDER & BOWEL PROBLEMS

Difficulties with controlling urination or bowel movements, including incontinence (leaking), constipation, or changes in frequency.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

COGNITIVE CHANGES

Declines in mental abilities, such as memory loss, difficulty concentrating, problems with problem-solving, or confusion.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

EMOTIONAL CHANGES

Shifts in mood or feelings, such as increased anxiety, irritability, sadness, or apathy. Can also include rapid mood swings.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

SOCIAL ISOLATION

Lack of contact and interaction with other people, leading to feelings of loneliness and disconnection.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

FINANCIAL STRESS

The cost of medical treatments can lead to financial stress and a loss of safety/security.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
🟨	🟨	🟨	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟫	🟫	🟫

ADDITIONAL NOTES

MEDICATION TRACKER

Use this basic medication tracker to stay on top of schedules, dosages and special notes from the medical team. The first line has been filled out for you as an example.

MEDICATION NAME	**DOSAGE**	**FREQUENCY**	**TIME(S)**	**NOTES**	**START DATE**	**END DATE**
Paracetamol	500g	2 x day	8am, 8pm	Take with food, avoid fizzy drinks	10 April 2025	Ongoing

APPOINTMENT CALENDAR

Use this basic appointment calendar to keep track of meetings, doctor visits and more. Write your questions and notes in the final column. The first line has been filled out for you as an example.

APPOINTMENT TYPE	DATE, TIME, LOCATION	CONTACT PERSON	TRANSPORT	REMINDERS	QUESTIONS & NOTES
Visit to GP	3pm Healthcare Central, Dubai Hills	Dr Al Harbi, 012 345 6789	Order Uber at 2.15pm	Bring medication list and symptom journal.	Is it normal for the muscle spasm medication to cause drowsiness?

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