

In A Nutshell  
June 2019

## Invisible Symptoms

I am writing this on 5/30/19. Today is World MS Day. Actually it is on 5/30 every year. I did not know that. This year the goal is to raise awareness of the invisible symptoms of MS and the unseen impact they have on the quality of life.

Symptoms of MS can vary by type and severity and do not necessarily correlate with how a person looks on the outside. At one time in our lives we have heard "but you look so good"

The physical appearance of a person may look healthy, but what is happening inside the brain and spinal cord of a person with MS is often destructive but not outwardly visible to others.

Here are 3 invisible symptoms:

### 1. Fatigue

This can be a very disabling symptom. It can be described as flu-like symptoms, muscle weakness and heaviness, brain fog. The nerve cells are using a lot of energy to bypass damaged and destroyed circuits within our brain and spinal cord. Fatigue can also be caused by depression, medications and sleep disorders.

### 2. Cognition

At least half of people with MS experience problems with cognition, like difficulties processing new information, solving problems, remembering names and appointment times, and concentrating on conversations or activities like reading or watching a movie. Some people stop interacting with others or even leave their jobs because of cognitive dysfunction, and this can trigger depression and anxiety.

### 3. Pain

MS does cause pain—and the vast majority of people with MS (around 80 percent) experience pain at some point in their disease course. Demyelination causes nerve signals to get misdirected to nearby pain receptors. What this means is that pain signals get sent to the brain when they shouldn't be. This is called neuropathic pain. There is also musculoskeletal pain which is muscle spasms and stiffness, joint pains, and back pain. A third pain is called paroxysmal pain. This is a sudden onset of pain that doesn't last long. I learned a new term="Lhermitte's sign". This is when you feel an electric shock-like pain go down your spine when you touch your chin to your chest.

<https://worldmsday.org/>

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/cope-with-invisible-symptoms-of-multiple-sclerosis-4157859>

## Just For Fun

I never really gave a lot of thought to the fact that there are people all over the world living with the same disease as me. Here is a map of the countries who participated in World MS Day:

<https://worldmsday.org/events/>

Here is a page of tweets, instagrams and videos from individuals from all over the world living with MS and sharing their invisible symptoms:

<https://worldmsday.org/events/> and click on the tab #MyInvisibleMS

You can send a tweet about your invisible symptoms to be added to these by using #MyInvisibleMS hashtag.