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## February 2019 Newsletter

*Offering support, care, and hope...right here at home!*

### Indiana Support Group Meeting Dates

**Evansville, IN** support group will **NOT meet** in February! See you in March!!

**Contacts:** Nita Ruxer / 812-479-3544 or Sharon Omer / 270-333-4701.

**Tell City, IN** support group will **NOT meet** in February! See you in March!!

**Contacts:** Terri Hasty / 812-649-4013 or Mary Ann Weatherholt / 812-719-2666.

**Washington, IN** support group will meet Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m. at Daviess Community Hospital.

**Contacts:** Fran Neal / 812-259-1565 or TSMSA / 1-866-514-4312.

### Kentucky Support Group Meeting Dates

**Henderson, KY** support group **will NOT** meet until further notice.

**Contacts:** Cheryl Walker / 270-823-4752 or Debbie Whittington / 270-827-8298.

**Owensboro, KY** support group will meet Saturday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, at 11:00 a.m. at HealthPark - Owensboro Health, 1006 Ford Ave, Owensboro, KY. Join us for an open discussion and refreshments.

**Contacts:** Susan Reynolds / 812-228-6100 or TSMSA / 1-866-514-5312.

### Illinois Support Group Meeting Dates

**Fairfield, IL** support group will meet Saturday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 11:00 a.m. at Fairfield Memorial Hospital in the Board Room of Horizon Clinic. Join us for an open discussion.

**Contacts:** Carol Anne Greenwood / 618-558-1045 or TSMSA / 1-866-514-4312.

*The Mission of the Tri-State Multiple Sclerosis Association  
is to enhance the quality of life for individuals living with multiple sclerosis and  
their families in Southern Indiana, Southern Illinois, and Western Kentucky.*



## Calendar of Events



### **February 20, Wednesday, Genentech (Ocrevus) Educational Lunch Program**

**Speaker:** Dr. Mark Tullman, Neurologist, Missouri Baptist Medical Center

**Time:** 12:30 (noon) Speaker: 1:00 **Please do not come before 12:30p.m.**

**Location:** Moonlite Bar-B-Q, Owensboro, KY

**RSVP:** You and 1 (one) guest: [Ocrevus.com/events](http://Ocrevus.com/events) or 1-844-627-3887



### **February 20, Wednesday, Genentech (Ocrevus) Educational Dinner Program**

**Speaker:** Dr. Mark Tullman, Neurologist, Missouri Baptist Medical Center

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.

**Location:** Biaggi's Ristorante Italiano, 6401 E Lloyd Exp, Evansville, IN

**RSVP:** You and 1 (one) guest: [Ocrevus.com/events](http://Ocrevus.com/events) or 1-844-627-3887



### **February 21, Thursday, Monthly Newsletter Folding**

**Time:** 11:30 a.m.

**Location:** TSMSA Office – Come help, while you make new friends!



### **Happy Birthday To You!**

Theresa Ladd	Nita Ruxer	Diana Helfrich
Bruce Houpp	Terry Shanks	JaVan Cook

If you would like to have your birthday included in our newsletter, please send a note that includes your name, date of birth, and signed permission for us to print it.



### ***In Memory of.....***

This is a wonderful way to acknowledge those individuals in our lives that have made a difference. Please include a note of who the donation is 'In Memory of' or 'In Honor of'.



### ***In Honor of.....***

#### **In Honor of Tri-State MS Association**

Dr. Rick Yeager	Denise Love Orrick	Yager Materials	Mr. & Mrs. John McNaughton
Regina Dillsworth	Jeffrey Curtis	David Titus	Mildred Connaway
Michael Clauson	Mike Cherry	Open Door UU Church	Mr. & Mrs. Al Yager
Stacy Little	Hillary Edmonson	Dr. Kristi Nord	

#### **In Memory of Joni Gentry**

Bruce Adler

#### **In Memory of Dani Goldsberry**

Linda Hawke  
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert Barr  
 Mr. & Mrs. Brian Tooley  
 Mackey Salem UM Church

#### **In Memory of Eugene "Coach"**

##### **VanHoose**

Mrs. Susie VanHoose  
 Debbie Hebbeler  
 Linda Mattingly

Spasticity is a common symptom of MS. About 80 percent of people with MS will have spasticity to some degree. Spasticity refers to stiffness and involuntary muscle spasms or contractions ranging from tightness to painful uncontrollable spasms. Spasticity can occur throughout the body, but it is most common in the legs. There has to be a certain amount of resting tension in your muscles in order for you to stay upright. For some people spasticity can be useful. Lower extremity spasticity can allow someone with weak legs to bear weight in order to walk or transfer.

When central nervous system pathways are disrupted (for example, by an MS lesion), loss of inhibition occurs. As a result, muscle tension increases, which causes spasticity. This tension occurs at the spinal cord level and is noted when your neurologist checks your reflexes. Your responses are controlled by central nervous system pathways that connect the brain to the spinal cord. They inhibit tension in the muscle groups. Loss of inhibition can produce a stiff gait and limit the use of your arms. Lower limbs typically become stiffer and upper limbs typically contract. This makes it more difficult to walk or move your limbs, increasing the amount of work required to do an activity, thus increasing fatigue.

Spasticity can be temporarily worsened by a coexisting illness, particularly if there is a fever. Dehydration and overheating may also be triggers. It has been said that interferon medications can cause the core body temperature to increase, which can temporarily increase spasticity. If left untreated, spasticity can lead to immobilized joints and bedsores.

Medications used to treat spasticity are Baclofen, Tizanidine (Zanaflex), Valium, Clonidine, and Dantrium. These medications do not cure spasticity, nor do they improve muscle strength or coordination. However they can help relieve the symptoms so the spasticity is less troublesome. When starting medications to treat spasticity, be aware that the medications can cause drowsiness, which can exacerbate fatigue.

Physical and occupational therapy are also used to treat spasticity. These two disciplines can work together to increase range of motion, mobility, strength, coordination, and comfort. A therapist can teach you range of motion exercises that can improve your mobility, strength, and coordination. Ask your neurologist for a referral to a physical or occupational therapist, if you think it will help you. Hot packs, ultrasound or topical agents facilitate stretching and range of motion. People with limited strength can use pool therapy to increase buoyancy, making it easier to exercise.

Intrathecal Baclofen (ITB) is an option to treat lower extremity spasticity. ITB is delivered directly to the spinal fluid via a surgically implanted pump. The pump, which is usually implanted at the waistline, is about the size of a hockey puck. A catheter is connected from the pump to the spinal canal. The dose is adjusted non-invasively, and refills are injected through the skin into the drug reservoir. The smaller doses of ITB have better results and fewer side effects than oral Baclofen.

Injecting Botox into the affected muscle can also be used to treat spasticity. This is most useful if spasticity is limited to several muscle groups. It can help to loosen a muscle before physical therapy. Injections are effective for 3 or 4 months. Injecting a chemical block using Phenol is another option for contracted muscles of the legs.

Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy (SDR) is a more drastic treatment. SDR is a surgical procedure that involves the selective cutting of nerve roots in the lumbar spine. Severing these fibers reduces messages from the muscle, thus reducing spasticity. This procedure works best for lower extremity spasticity and can provide many years of relief.

Some complementary therapies are: acupuncture, biofeedback, electromagnetic stimulation, yoga, tai chi, aquatherapy or aquacise, hippotherapy (horseback riding with a specially trained hippotherapist), and massage. Always consult your doctor before beginning any of these therapies.

As always, adequate nutrition, sufficient sleep, stress management, daily stretching, and exercise are very important. Talk to your neurologist to see what treatment would be best for you if you are experiencing spasticity. If you use physical therapy, be sure to find a good physical therapist familiar with MS, who is willing to help you with an appropriate exercise program.

Another common MS symptom is the MS hug, which is a tight, squeezing band-like feeling around the torso. I usually get the MS hug when I am tired, hot, or overstressed.

The following are a few suggestions to fight the pain and discomfort of MS hugs. Every person responds differently. So just try each of these ideas until something works!

- ✓ Apply a cool compress, such as a cool washcloth over the area
- ✓ Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet
- ✓ Take a cool shower if you are overheated
- ✓ Drink ice water if you are in a hot place
- ✓ Get a massage
- ✓ Stay rested and get at least 8 hours of sleep each night
- ✓ Use deep breathing techniques, yoga, and meditation
- ✓ Wear loose, comfortable clothing
- ✓ My neurologist advised wearing a tight girdle to compete against the tightness
- ✓ The one thing that always works for me is to lie flat on my back and rest until the tightness subsides. Sometimes it takes several hours or until the next day for the pain to subside.

Medications may also fight the pain of an MS hug. Medications your doctor may prescribe include: acetaminophen or ibuprofen, pain relief cream, muscle relaxers (e.g. Baclofen or Zanaflex), and neuropathic medications (e.g. Gabapentin or Lyrica). While taking these medications, continue taking your disease modifying therapy.

Talk with your health care team about the best treatment for you.



## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Keep these numbers handy after filling in the boxes for your local services!

Emergency

911

Poison Control

1-800-222-1222

Do Not Call List

1-888-382-1222

Visa Fraud Prevention

1-800-847-2911

Tri-State MS Assoc.

812-423-5943

Fire Department

Local Pharmacist

Neurologist

Family Doctor

## Disease Modifying Therapies for MS

The following are the Disease Modifying Medications currently available in the US.  
Do you have questions about any of these medications, or do you need financial assistance?  
Help is just a click or a phone call away. Visit the websites or call the numbers listed below.

<b>Aubagio</b> (Sanofi Genzyme)	Once a day pill	<a href="http://www.msonetoone.com">www.msonetoone.com</a> 1-855-676-6326
<b>Avonex</b> (Biogen)	Once a week injection (intramuscular)	<a href="http://www.abovems.com">www.abovems.com</a> 1-800-456-2255
<b>Betaseron</b> (Bayer)	Every other day injection (subcutaneous)	<a href="http://www.betaseron.com/betaplus/affordability">www.betaseron.com/betaplus/affordability</a> 1-800-788-1467
<b>Copaxone</b> (Teva)	Three days / week injection (subcutaneous)	<a href="http://www.sharesolutions.com">www.sharesolutions.com</a> 1-800-887-8100
<b>Extavia</b> (Novartis)	Every other day injection (subcutaneous)	<a href="http://www.extavia.com">www.extavia.com</a> 1-866-925-2333
<b>Gilenya</b> (Novartis)	Once a day pill	<a href="http://www.gilenya.com/c/ms-pill/go-program">www.gilenya.com/c/ms-pill/go-program</a> 1-800-445-3692
<b>Glatopa</b> (Sandoz) Generic for Copaxone	Daily injection (subcutaneous)	<a href="http://www.glatopa.com">www.glatopa.com</a> 1-855-452-8672
<b>Lemtrada</b> (Sanofi Genzyme)	<i>1st treatment:</i> 12 mg/day on 5 consecutive days. <i>2nd treatment:</i> 12 mg/day on 3 consecutive days administered 12 mo after 1st treatment course	<a href="http://www.msonetoone.com">www.msonetoone.com</a> 1-855-676-6326
<b>Ocrevus</b> (Genentech)	IV infusion therapy	<a href="http://www.ocrevus.com">www.ocrevus.com</a> 1-844-672-6729
<b>Plegridy</b> (Biogen)	Bi-weekly injection (subcutaneous)	<a href="http://www.abovems.com">www.abovems.com</a> 1-800-456-2255
<b>Rebif</b> (EMD Serono)	Three days / week injection (subcutaneous)	<a href="http://www.ms lifelines.com">www.ms lifelines.com</a> 1-877-447-3243
<b>Tecfidera</b> (Biogen)	Once a day pill	<a href="http://www.abovems.com">www.abovems.com</a> 1-800-456-2255
<b>Tysabri</b> (Biogen)	IV infusion therapy given once every four weeks	<a href="http://www.abovems.com">www.abovems.com</a> 1-800-456-2255



REHAB FOR LIFE & TRI-STATE MS ASSOCIATION



# Strengthening & Balance Workshop



Rehab for Life and TMSA will be hosting Strengthening and Balance workshops in February! This class is \$5 per person, per class to be paid that evening and ANYONE is welcome.

**As a Valentine's Day special, our February 14th class will be FREE!** Classes will be held at Rehab for Life (1449 Kimber Ln # 103A, Evansville). This is a great opportunity for individuals with MS, family, friends, or ANYONE!

- Tuesday, 2/5: 12-1 PM
- Thursday, 2/7: 5:15-6:15 PM
- Tuesday, 2/12: 12-1 PM

Free Class!



Thursday, 2/14: 5:15-6:15 PM



Free Class!

- Tuesday, 2/19: 12-1 PM
- Thursday, 2/21: 5:15-6:15 PM
- Tuesday, 2/26: 12-1 PM
- Thursday, 2/28: 5:15-6:15 PM

RSVP to Tri-State MS: (812) 423-5943

by the day before the class you are signing up for!



### **AARP Foundation Tax-Aide**

Beginning in February, AARP Foundation Tax-Aide will offer free tax preparation for low- to moderate-income taxpayers, especially those 50 and older. Services will be offered at several locations in Evansville, Newburgh, Chandler, Princeton, and Fort Branch, IN; Owensboro and Hardinsburg, KY; and Fairfield, Mount Vernon, and Salem, IL. For scheduled dates and times, visit [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide) and search for locations by zip code. Or you can call AARP toll-free at 1-866-448-3618.

When you go to a Tax-Aide location, don't forget to take your important documents, including your previous year's tax return, your Driver's License (or government issued ID), and your bank account information (if you want to direct deposit any refunds due).

**PLEASE NOTE:** The hours at each location are subject to change on a weekly basis. So call the location the day before you plan to go to confirm the AARP Tax-Aide hours.