

Telling your friends

Whether you tell your friends that you have MS is up to you. In the end, you will almost always have to inform those close to you of your condition. This page gives some of advice on how to do it.

What they need to know.

Before you tell people that you have MS, you need to think about what they need to know. Many people will have no experience with MS or, on the other hand, may know of someone with MS whose experience of the disease may be very different from yours. Your community includes people who are intimately connected with you and those whom you know casually. Your relatives, friends and employer naturally will want to know what has happened to you, especially if you have visible symptoms. They may also want to know what they can do to help. If you are honest with those close to you and let them know you will accept help when you need it, you will allay their worries and probably find them very supportive.

Explaining MS

You can start with a simple explanation of MS (See What is Multiple Sclerosis section) and how it affects you at this time. In this way people can be made aware of any practical support that you may need, without imagining that your MS is any worse than it is. If you have a standard rehearsed description which you use, it can help to ensure that you feel confident giving the information and that the details you give are consistent. Certain general issues may need to be quickly refuted - for many people there are stereotypes which surround MS (e.g. that everyone with MS ends up in a wheelchair) or misunderstandings (eg that MS is contagious). MS societies have pamphlets and brochures that will make the task easier. Casual acquaintances can be told about your condition should it come up in conversation, if you wish. In this case there is probably no need for a formal explanation.