



National MS Society Information Sourcebook

www.nationalmssociety.org/sourcebook

Outlook for a Cure

Research to identify effective treatments, and prevent or cure MS, has never been more promising. It is difficult, however, to make predictions or to estimate how long it will be before meaningful results are achieved.

The destruction of myelin (demyelination), the fatty sheath that surrounds and protects the nerve fibers, as well as damage to the nerve fibers themselves, cause nerve impulses to be slowed or halted and produce the symptoms of MS.

Developing a true cure for MS—that is, a treatment that would reverse symptoms and restore the individual's former level of function—will probably involve a multi-step process, including:

- Halting the destruction of myelin and nerve fibers
- Repairing myelin and damaged nerve fibers

Research is currently ongoing around the world, testing and developing agents to stop the immune attack that appears to underlie the destruction of brain and spinal cord tissues. Other research has shown that myelin repair does indeed take place during the course of MS, and investigators are making headway in deciphering the natural factors that stimulate this repair. Experiments in laboratory animals with experimental allergic encephalomyelitis (EAE) and other animal models of MS have shown that it is possible to stimulate myelin repair in MS-like disease. In addition, researchers are beginning to have success in transplanting repair cells into the central nervous system in animal models.

Investigators also continue to search for better treatments that will effectively halt the progression of every form of MS.

The National MS Society offers a \$1 million cash prize, called the Ralph I. Straus Award, to any scientist(s) whose research leads to the development of a way to prevent or arrest multiple sclerosis.

See also...

Sourcebook

- Clinical Trials
- Experimental Allergic Encephalomyelitis (EAE)
- Interferons
- Myelin

Society Web Resources

- Treatments
www.nationalmssociety.org/Treatments
- Research
www.nationalmssociety.org/Research
- Research Fact Sheet
www.nationalmssociety.org/ResearchFactSheet
- Research FAQs
www.nationalmssociety.org/ResearchFAQ
- Progress in Research
www.nationalmssociety.org/ResearchProgress
- Spotlight: MS and Myelin
www.nationalmssociety.org/Myelin

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is proud to be a source of information about multiple sclerosis. Our comments are based on professional advice, published experience, and expert opinion, but do not represent individual therapeutic recommendations or prescription. For specific information and advice, consult your personal physician.

To contact your chapter, call **1-800-FIGHT-MS** (1-800-344-4867) or visit the National MS Society web site: www.nationalmssociety.org.

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