

# Health Facts & Myths

## Top Multiple Sclerosis Myths Debunked

(NAPSA)—More than 400,000 Americans are affected by multiple sclerosis (MS), a chronic and disabling disease that affects the central nervous system. MS patients not only have to cope with their disease but also fight the many myths they hear surrounding the disease. These include:

**Myth #1:** Being diagnosed with MS means you will no longer lead a normal life.

**Fact:** Many people with MS go on to live long and normal lives, and continue to pursue their personal, work and family goals with the help of effective and early therapy.

**Myth #2:** All people with MS end up in a wheelchair.

**Fact:** According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS), most people with MS will remain mobile, although some may need assistance as the disease progresses

**Myth #3:** MS drugs make a person sicker than the disease.

**Fact:** Common side effects associated with a treatment such as flu-like symptoms often diminish over time. The benefits of



**Even with her recent diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, competitive athlete Robin Maxwell maintains an active lifestyle.**

starting treatment early can outweigh side effects of the drug.

**Myth #4:** Nothing can slow the progression of MS.

**Fact:** While there is no cure, there are several FDA approved treatments that have been proven to modify or slow the progression of physical disability.

**Myth #5:** People with MS have to reduce physical activity.

**Fact:** Many people with MS do not need to lower their level of

activity. Moderation is the key and people with MS must learn to listen to their body.

Robin Maxwell, mother of two and a triathlete at the time of her MS diagnosis in 2007, did not allow these myths to stop her from moving forward with her life and helping others.

“Though I have MS, I maintain an active lifestyle and still participate in competitive athletics,” said Maxwell.

“Early treatment is a key factor to an active lifestyle. Shortly after being diagnosed, I began treatment on Copaxone (glatiramer acetate), a daily injectable treatment, but due to injection site reactions, I switched to once-a-week AVONEX (Interferon beta-1a), which makes it easier to stay on therapy. I find that this therapy disrupts my disease, not my lifestyle.” AVONEX has been proven effective for up to three years in clinical trials.

For more information, visit [www.MSActiveSource.com](http://www.MSActiveSource.com) or [www.AVONEX.com](http://www.AVONEX.com).

Please keep in mind that every individual experiences MS and MS therapy differently.

Indication: AVONEX (Interferon beta-1a) is approved by FDA to treat relapsing forms of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) to decrease the number of flare-ups and slow the occurrence of some of the physical disability that is common in people with MS. AVONEX is approved for use in people who have experienced a first attack and have lesions consistent with MS on their MRI. Important Safety Information: AVONEX can cause serious side effects, so before you start taking AVONEX, you should talk with your doctor about the possible benefits of AVONEX and its possible side effects to decide if AVONEX is right for you. Sometimes interferons, including AVONEX, make people feel sad. If you are taking AVONEX, and feel unusually sad, you should tell a family member or friend right away and call your doctor as soon as possible. Some people have had severe allergic reactions, a drop in their red or white blood cell levels, a drop in the cells that help form blood clots, heart problems, changes in their thyroid function or seizures. Your liver may be affected by taking AVONEX and a few patients have developed severe liver injury. Your health care provider may ask you to have regular blood tests to make sure that your liver is working properly. If your skin or the whites of your eyes become yellow or if you are bruising easily you should call your doctor immediately. AVONEX has not been studied in pregnant women. If you become pregnant while taking AVONEX, you should stop taking AVONEX immediately, tell your doctor, and consider enrolling in the AVONEX Pregnancy Registry by calling 1-800-456-2255. Most people who take AVONEX have flu-like symptoms (fever, chills, sweating, muscle aches, and tiredness) early during the course of therapy. For many people, these symptoms lessen or go away over time. Talk to your doctor if these symptoms continue longer than the first few months of therapy, or if they are difficult to manage. For more information, refer to the patient Medication Guide in the full product information available at [www.AVONEX.com](http://www.AVONEX.com). This information is not intended to replace discussions with a health care provider.