Why should people with multiple sclerosis (MS) be concerned with heat and temperature? 

A rise in temperature can cause some people with MS to experience a temporary worsening of symptoms. This can happen when physical or environmental factors cause a rise in body temperature. Symptoms may include blurred vision, fatigue, dizziness or a weakness in one or both legs. Although this temporary worsening of symptoms (known as pseudo-exacerbation) may feel like a real MS attack, symptoms will usually improve as the body temperature returns to normal.1

Why does temperature affect people with MS? 

Nerve fibers allow messages controlling different parts of the body to move around the brain and spinal cord in the form of electrical impulses. In the brain or spinal cord, nerve fibers or their protective outer layer (myelin) damaged by MS find it harder to conduct these electrical impulses. Body warming further inhibits nerve conduction, so some damaged nerve fibers stop working entirely. A reduction in body temperature may allow more signals to be transmitted across the damaged nerve.2

What can be done to manage my sensitivity to the heat? 

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Studies have shown that cooling the body can help lessen the negative effects of heat and improve the quality of life of people with MS. According to a 2010 research study, Dr. George Kraft found that “...after body temperature had dropped about one degree... participants improved on tests of coordination, balance, and in the ability to sustain physical activity.” We concluded that cooling is an appropriate therapy for people with MS heat sensitivity.3

“Cooling therapy is generally well-tolerated, and limited research studies have shown possible benefits for some MS-associated symptoms,” says Dr. Allen C. Bowling. “The symptoms that may improve from cooling include weakness, spasticity, tremor, incoordination, walking difficulties, fatigue, visual difficulties, speech disorders, cognitive difficulty, urinary difficulties, and sexual difficulties.”4 Each person’s MS is unique and there is no “one size fits all” choice for body cooling. There are many different types of body cooling garments available, and the best choice for you depends on YOU, your environment and your individual needs. Read this guide to learn more!
Types of Body Cooling for MS

There are many different types of cooling products available. This guide may help you choose the most effective products and best value for your individual needs.

Please note: The information in this brochure is a guide and should not take the place of a medical consultation. Always discuss symptom management with your healthcare provider.

Testimonials

"I can finally leave the house during the summer! I was diagnosed with MS almost 5 years ago. I’m VERY sensitive to extreme heat. During the summer where I live it’s nearly impossible to safely or comfortably leave the A.C. cooled environments. This cooling vest has solved all of that!"
Mike in California

“Having a cooling pack vest changed my life! I ride horses, and I was actually able to show on an 85 degree day! Now I don’t have to plan around the weather to compete. Thank you!”
Carolyn in Maine

“One of the worst things about having MS is feeling like a prisoner to the AC in the summertime. I am very active bike riding, gardening, etc. and it’s all thanks to this cooling vest! I love it!”
Becky in Illinois

“The cooling vest is great. I can now function better. Today it was 106 degrees in the shade and I felt so much better, less like melted jello.”
Ray in California

“I absolutely love my vest! It allows me to go outside and enjoy life more than I did before.”
Kayla in South Dakota

“Wow! What a difference the cooling vest has made in my life! So many things that I can do now... gardening, craft shows, church events, family barbecues... The cooling vest has bought me a new lease on life with MS!”
Nancy in Texas

Frozen Water-Based Cooling Pack Garments

- How long does it cool? Will cool for up to 2-3 hours in any climate.
- How much does it weigh? 2 lbs. to 5.5 lbs.
- Best for: Travel or situations without access to a freezer. Packs can be activated in ice water or the refrigerator. Safe for pediatrics.

“Phase Change” Cooling Pack Garments

- How long does it cool? Will cool for up to 2-3 hours in any climate.
- How much does it weigh? 1 lbs. to 4 lbs.
- Best for: Any environment with access to a freezer. Highest level of cooling for its cost. The most common choice for MS cooling!

Water-Activated Evaporative Garments

- How long does it cool? Many hours of evaporative cooling in lower humidity.
- How much does it weigh? Control the weight by limiting the time soaked in water.
- Best for: Outdoor activity. Inexpensive and lightweight choice. No freezer required.

Circulating Cool Water “Active” Cooling Systems

- How long does it cool? Extended periods of time; add ice to reservoir as needed.
- How much does it weigh? Vests weigh less than 1 lb. with water in the lines.
- Best for: The highest level of deep core body cooling. Ideal for therapy applications. Use only under the guidance of a medical professional.

Cool Tip: Consider a garment with pockets that are compatible with both phase change and frozen water-based cooling packs for flexibility!

COOL TIP: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR SELECT COOLING GARMENTS THROUGH MS NON-PROFIT COOLING PROGRAMS. mymsaa.org

This brochure is provided by Polar Products Inc. For more information on their body cooling garments, please visit www.polarproducts.com or call 1.800.763.8423.