Helpful Apps for MS Management

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Using Technology to Your Advantage

Living with a chronic disease is not easy, but when your illness also tends to twist and turn in unpredictable ways, life can get pretty complicated very quickly. Even though different MS patients will experience symptoms, emotional challenges, and life changes differently, everyone can do with an extra helping hand.

More companies and individuals are reaching out to fellow sufferers with apps designed to ease some of the burden that comes with the MS lifestyle. New approaches to disease tracking and better avenues of communication are at your fingertips, and although it may seem like a small addition, the right MS app could bring major, positive changes to your daily routine.

Features that Help with MS Management

MS is a complicated disease, and the tools you choose should simplify your day-to-day living, not complicate things further. There are a few general features that you'll probably find useful, especially when you experience MS exacerbations or changes in your treatment plan:

- **Journal**. If you haven't been keeping a daily MS journal, it's time to begin. The freedom to write, in your own words, what you're feeling or thinking is emotionally and physically beneficial. While paperback journals have some advantages, an electronic version can make it easier to organize, reference and share key info.
- **Medication tracking**. MS tends to affect memory, and foggy thinking can have dangerous consequences for your medication routine. You can eliminate a lot of the worry and risk with a reliable tool that keeps track of all the dosage details.
- **Analysis and reporting**. Charts, graphs, color-coded symptom reference, and reports to send out to your doctors can help clarify changes and symptoms for you, and make it much easier to communicate with your whole support network. The key is to find a clear system that's easy for you to work with, or else the technical aspects won't be of much use to you.

Top Apps for MS Patients

The complexity of the apps differ, and the right match for you will probably depend on the complexity of your daily routine. If you have lots of medications, appointments, and symptoms to track, you may find it easier to use one app that can centralize all your data. On the other hand, sometimes the simpler, streamlined tools are the easiest to adopt for the long-term.

Luckily for you, new apps for MS are always under development, and current versions are being refined and updated. Take a look at some of the highest rated apps that could make your self-care – and general MS treatment – much more manageable:

MSAA Multiple Sclerosis Self-Care Manager

Created as a companion to the @Point of Care app for health care professionals, the My MS Manager app is a good all-round management tool for MS patients. It's created by the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America (the MSAA), which means the information is thorough, focused, and up-to-date.

With files for symptoms, triggers, medication history, lab results, and reference tools, this MS manager app keeps a lot of your important information in one place. It's tidy and easy to navigate, but it's not entirely customizable – some patients complain that they can't group symptoms to indicate a relapse, while others would appreciate a larger note-taking area.

Available for iOS and Android devices.

Next page: four more great apps for people with MS.

Top Apps for MS Patients

CareZone

Good MS treatment relies on good coordination. All of your support – doctors, family, pharmacists, and other people you need to lean on – need to be able to communicate with you (and often with each other) in order to help you stay on track. The CareZone app is not designed specifically for MS, but will definitely help with a range of tasks and challenges that many MS patients must juggle.

You can keep all your info organized with a journal, calendar, contact list, medication log, to-do list, and any photos or files that could come in handy. In fact, you can even take a photo of your medication, and the app will fill in the name, dosage, and other pertinent info for you! You can share whatever you like with whomever you choose, but it's a very useful tool for personal reminders, too.

Available for iOS and Android devices.

MS Journal

Daily injections are a common – and unwelcome – part of MS, plus they can be difficult to track, especially when you need to take them in different sites. The MS journal has one specific aim, and that's to help you record and remind yourself when and where to take your medications.

The app includes a countdown timer to your next injection, you can add comments to help you track and record details, and then send reports to your health care team. The best thing about MS Journal is its simplicity: one screen clearly tells you the time, location, depth, and units of medication to inject. On the other hand, it won't help much with daily symptom management.

Available for iOS devices.

RxmindMe

An MS diagnosis usually comes with a variety of medications, and it can be difficult to keep everything straight on a good day (let alone when brain fog and memory loss takes over). That's where RxmindMe comes in handy: helping you note which medications you need to take, when exactly to take them, and perhaps most importantly, if you've already taken them.

You can search for facts on medications, refill a prescription (at Walgreens), and email off of your prescriptions details to your doctor or other healthcare provider from this single app. The only problem is that it may be *too* helpful – be careful not to rely solely on this app (or any other) when it comes to your medication dosage and

schedule.

Available for iOS devices.

SymTrac

Aiming to take out some of the stress and obligation of MS, SymTrac tracks your symptoms and other environmental factors that could weigh in on your comfort, but it also helps you record relapses clearly – and that can make a huge difference in your MS treatment. In fact, the customizable app reduces the risk of serious issues that can arise when seemingly small changes go unreported.

The easy-to-read charts and other simple recording features makes this a good app for relapse management. Since the app was designed around input from MS patients, there is an emphasis on accessibility and straightforward tracking. Doctors like SymTrac because it takes the work out of remembering symptoms and changes until their next neurologist appointment (which could be 12 months away).

Recording information is only one part of the equation: in order to improve your approach to your treatment, you need to keep learning about your disease. While you're searching for the perfect MS map to carry along with you, consider downloading Momentum Magazine, a condensed online version of the National MS Society's magazine. It gives you practical tidbits to make your life happier and more comfortable, but it's also your lifeline to the research and advancements that are taking place behind the scenes.

Available for iOS and Android devices.