



UCSF Multiple Sclerosis & Neuroinflammation Center

VIP

Vital Information Packet
for Patients, Families, & Caregivers

UCSF Health

Multiple Sclerosis and
Neuroinflammation Center
JOAN AND SANFORD I. WEILL
NEUROSCIENCES BUILDING
1651 Fourth St., Suite 252
San Francisco, CA 94158

Welcome:

Thank you for partnering with UCSF for your care. We are delighted to welcome you to the UCSF Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroinflammation Center.

About Our Center & Team:

The UCSF Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroinflammation Center is one of California's and the nation's premier programs for evaluating, diagnosing, and treating patients with inflammatory diseases of the nervous system. Our expertise in caring for patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) is recognized by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, which has designated us as a Comprehensive Care Center and a Partner in MS Care.

Our goal is to help patients manage their symptoms and stay as active, healthy, and independent as possible. The exemplary care we provide is made possible by the exceptional physicians, nurses, staff, and researchers who come together every day to serve our patients and their families. Our team includes renowned experts in neurology, neuroimmunology, autoimmune neurology, neuro-ophthalmology, neuro-infectious disease, neuropsychology, and rehabilitative medicine. We work closely together to provide personalized, comprehensive care for patients with any type of neuroinflammatory disease. The team also serves as a resource for education and emotional support for patients and their families. The state-of-the-art tools and services of our clinic's Neurodiagnostic Center enable us to thoroughly evaluate each patient's condition and use the findings to design the most effective treatment plan for each individual.

In addition to delivering the best possible patient care, we are committed to advancing the medical understanding of the causes of neuroinflammatory diseases and to discovering potential cures. UCSF is a top recipient of research funding from the National Institutes of Health and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

We sincerely hope that the care you receive exceeds your expectations.

A Special Thank You:

We would also like to take a moment to express our deep gratitude to the members of the UCSF Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroinflammation Center Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). The idea for this information packet originated from our PFAC, and without their guidance, input, and suggestions, this packet would not have been possible. We are grateful for their time, efforts, and dedication.

Thank you for choosing UCSF for your care. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Gelfand, MD, MAS, FAAN

Professor of Neurology, Medical Director of the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Clinic, Director of Clinical Operations in the Division of Neuroimmunology and Glial Biology

Ari Green, MD, MCR

Chief, Division of Neuroimmunology and Glial Biology, Debbie and Andy Rachleff Distinguished Professor of Neurology, Department of Neurology & Department of Ophthalmology

How to Use this Guide:

Welcome! You have received this informational packet because you or a loved one have an appointment at the UCSF Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroinflammation Center. This does not necessarily mean that you have a confirmed neurologic diagnosis, but it does mean that you are seeking consultation with our neurology team for diagnosis, treatment, or advice.

Purpose of This Packet:

This vital information packet serves as a general reference to help you navigate your care and access services and resources. It provides an overview of our center and appointments, contact information, and tips for navigating services and locating local providers to help you manage your care. We hope that this information will help you connect with the people and programs that best serve your needs.

Living Document:

This packet is a living document and will be updated as needed. If you have any questions about the contents of this packet or need more information, please reach out to our team. We are here to help and hope this guide is useful to you and your loved ones.

Thank you for trusting us with your care.

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SECTION 1: Contacts

Important Contact Information:

We want to ensure you have all the necessary information to reach us and access the services you need. Often, the best and quickest way to contact us is through MyChart. If you need to speak with someone more immediately, please call the main number for the **UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Main Clinic: (415) 353-2273.**

Other important UCSF Health numbers for clinical care & services:

- Neurodiagnostic Scheduling: (415) 353-2273 (*same number for clinic*)
- Weill Building MRI Scheduling: (415) 502-9386
- Weill Building Blood Draw/Lab: (415) 502-9392
- Adult Infusion at the Weill Institute: (415) 353-7155
- EEG (Electroencephalogram) Scheduling: Contact Gopal Rao at (415) 353-1986
- EMG (Electromyogram) Scheduling: (415) 353-2273
- Neuro Radiology (CT Guided LP's) Scheduling: (415) 502-1977 or Email: CT.Spine.Scheduling@ucsf.edu
- UCSF Ophthalmology: (415) 353-2020
- UCSF Radiology Scheduling: (415) 353-3900
- Patient Financial Services: (415) 353-3333 or (866) 433-4035
Email: patient.financialservices@ucsf.edu
- Patient Relations: (415) 353-1936
- Medical Records: (415) 353-2221
- Imaging Library (for reports & images): (415) 353-1640, option 3
- MyChart or Zoom Technical Help: (415) 514-6000

We hope this information helps you connect with the right resources. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

SECTION 2: Location & Parking

Where to Find Us:

UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences Building
1651 4th Street, 2nd Floor, Suite 252
San Francisco, CA 94158
Phone: (415) 353-2273
Fax: (415) 353-2633

For information on transportation options, including parking, public transportation, and shuttles, please visit: [UCSF Transportation for Patients and Visitors](https://campuslifeserviceshome.ucsf.edu/transportation/patients-visitors) or <https://campuslifeserviceshome.ucsf.edu/transportation/patients-visitors>.

How to Get to Us:

Detailed maps and directions to our building can be found on the UCSF Health website: [UCSF Health Locations - Mission Bay](https://www.ucsfhealth.org/locations/mission-bay) ([ucsfhealth.org/locations/mission-bay](https://www.ucsfhealth.org/locations/mission-bay))

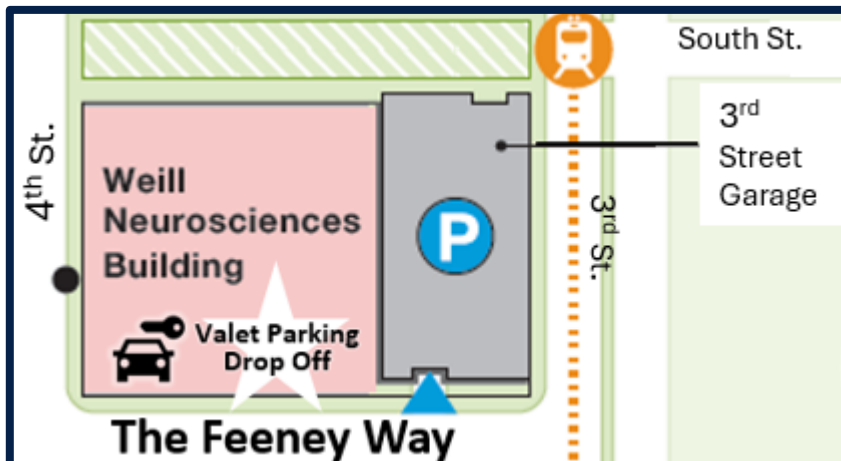
Parking and Transportation Options:

Valet Services:

We recommend using valet parking for convenience. Valet services are available for the same pricing as our UCSF parking garages (no additional charge for patients for use of the valet service).

Valet Location:

Feeney Way, between 4th and 3rd Streets.



Hours of Operation:

Monday-Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Cars can be checked in until 4:00 p.m. and retrieved until 6:00 p.m. After 6:00 p.m., please go to the 3rd Street Parking Lot to retrieve your keys.

Valet Parking Fees:

- Hourly: \$5.00
- Daily Max: \$35.00
- Disabled/ADA Placard: \$7.00

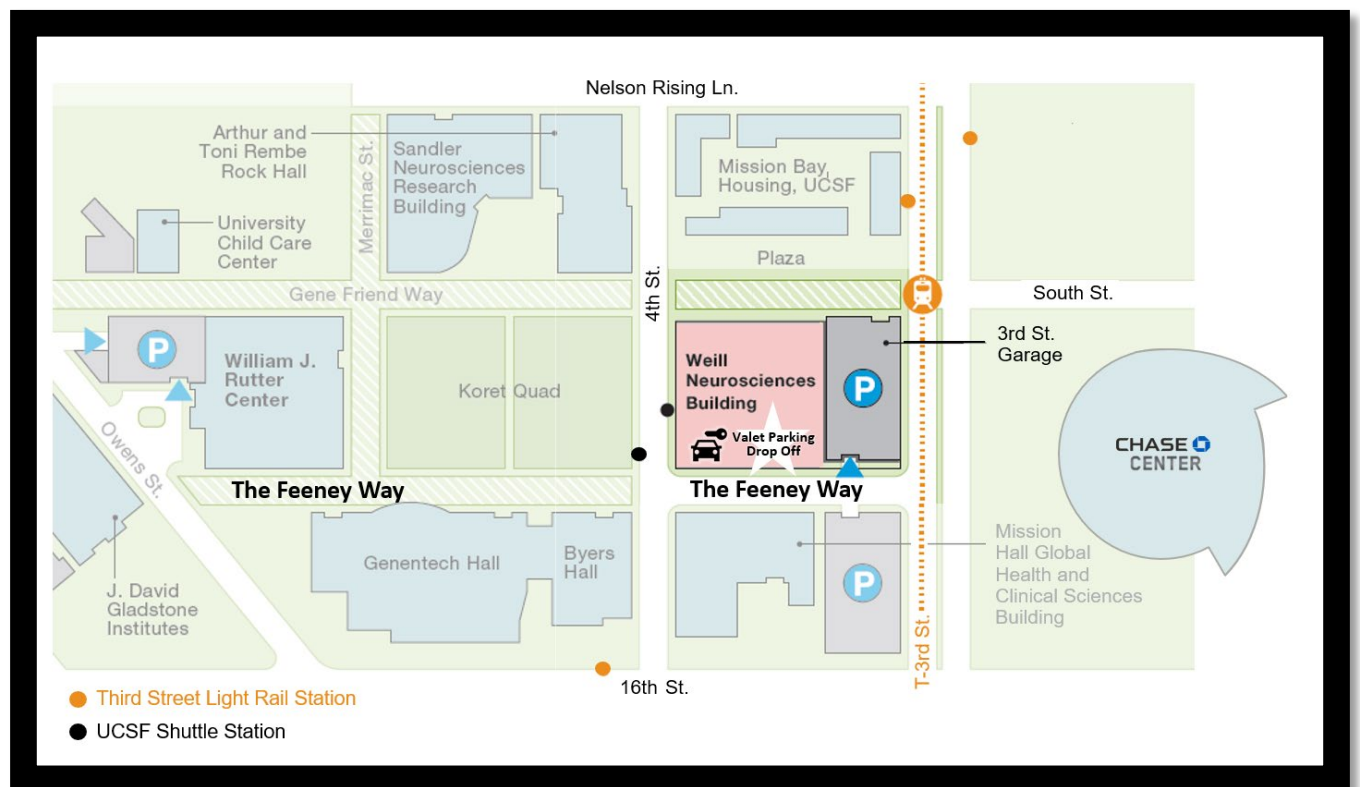
Self-Parking Option:

If you prefer to park, please allow extra time.

Closest Public Parking Lot:

3rd Street Parking Lot
1630 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94158
Entrance on Feeney Way, between 4th and 3rd Streets.

Parking for patients is reserved on the first two levels.



Parking Fees:

- Hourly: \$5.00
- Daily Max: \$35.00
- Disabled/ADA Placard: \$7.00 (daily max)

Paying for Parking at the Feeney Way Parking Lot:

1) PayByPhone Mobile App

- Open the PayByPhone app (or use the PayByPhone website).
- Enter the UCSF Mission Bay location code shown on the signs in the Feeney Way lot.
- Enter your license plate number.
- Choose the amount of time you want to park and pay by credit/debit card.

2) Pay Station in the Lot

- Note your license plate number before leaving your vehicle.
- Go to the pay station.
- Select the parking type (regular, ADA, or motorcycle).
- Enter your license plate number.
- Choose your parking duration and pay with cash or a credit card.
- You can receive either a printed or text receipt.

**Please note, Feeney Way lot is gateless, there is no ticket to pull and no cashier when you leave. Payment is tied to your license plate.*

For information about other parking lots and directions, visit: [Mission Bay | UC San Francisco](#) or www.ucsf.edu/maps/mission-bay.

Being Dropped Off:

If you have a ride and will be dropped off, the designated patient drop-off area is located on the corner of 4th Street and Feeney Way, on the Feeney Way side of our building.

Public Transportation:

- 511: Call 511 for transportation information for the Bay Area, including traffic, public transit, carpool, bicycling, and parking information.
- San Francisco Muni: For buses and trains within San Francisco, call (415) 673-MUNI or visit [SFMTA \(sfmta.com\)](http://sfmta.com).
- BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit): For routes and schedules, call 510-464-6000 or visit [BART Schedules](https://www.bart.gov/schedules) (<https://www.bart.gov/schedules>).

UCSF Shuttles:

Free shuttles for patients and staff operate between Mission Bay and UCSF locations throughout San Francisco. For stop locations and schedules, visit [UCSF Transportation Services](http://campuslifeservices.ucsf.edu/transportation/services/shuttles) (campuslifeservices.ucsf.edu/transportation/services/shuttles).

Frequently Asked Question: Will My Health Insurance Cover My Transportation to My Appointment?

Unfortunately, Medicare and most commercial insurance companies do not cover the costs of transportation to medical appointments, nor do they provide help in arranging transportation. If you think your health plan may offer transportation support, call the member's services number on the back of your insurance card.

However, most Managed Medi-Cal plans do offer support for transportation to medical appointments. If you have a Managed Medi-Cal plan and require help with transportation, please call the number for Member Services on your Medi-Cal insurance card. Many plans also have a dedicated transportation number. Your health plan may provide mileage reimbursement, arrange a car, wheelchair van, or other transportation, depending on your needs.

To arrange transportation through Medi-Cal:

- Medi-Cal plans can vary in the amount of notice you need to provide them in advance of an appointment. Typically, plans require that you call at least 5 to 7 business days before your scheduled appointment. Please see below for more specific information.
- All Plans will require that you provide your appointment date and time, clinic address, your neurologist's name, and your home address.

Dedicated Transportation Numbers for Common Medi-Cal Plans:

Anthem Blue Cross Health Plan (Medi-Cal):

- Call at least 5 business days before your appointment, or 7 business days for new riders.
- Call: 877-931-4755 (TTY 711).

Alameda Alliance:

- Call at least 3 business days before your appointment.
- Services provided through ModivCare: 866-791-4158, TTY: Dial 711.

CalViva Health Plan:

- Services provided through ModivCare: 855-253-6864, TTY: Dial 711.

Central California Alliance for Health:

- Call at least 5 to 7 business days before your appointment.
- Non-Medical Transport (NMT): 800-700-3874, ext. 5577 (TTY: Dial 711).
- Non-Emergency Medical Transport (NEMT): 800-700-3874, ext. 5640 (TTY: 711).

Contra Costa Health Plan:

- Call at least 5-7 business days in advance for NMT, and 7-10 days for NEMT.

- Call: 855-222-1218 (TTY 711).

Health Plan of San Mateo:

- Call: 800-750-4776 or 650-616-2133, TTY: 800-735-2929 or Dial 711.

Health Plan of San Joaquin:

- Call: 209-942-6320 or 888-936-PLAN (7526), toll-free, 209-942-6306 (TDD).

Partnership Health Plan:

- Call: 866-828-2303.

San Francisco Health Plan:

- Call at least 10 days before your visit.
- NMT: Call Customer Service at (415) 547-7800, (800) 288-5555 (toll-free), or 1(888) 883-7347 (TTY).
- NEMT: Call ModivCare at (855) 251-7098 after SFHP approval.

Other Transportation Options:

- Taxi
- Ride Share (Uber, Lyft)
- Paratransit: For those with disabilities preventing use of public transit. Contact your local public transport department.
- Medivan: Public transit service from Downtown Modesto to Bay Area Medical Centers. Call 209-527-4900 for reservations. For more information about Medivan, visit: [Medivan](https://www.stanrta.org/480/Medivan) (<https://www.stanrta.org/480/Medivan>).
- Family or Friends: Asking someone you know for a ride.

SECTION 3: The UCSF MSNI Center Team

Our Neurologists:

At the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center, you will find an exceptional team of neurologists who are leaders in diagnosing and treating MS and neuroinflammatory disorders. Our center is recognized as one of California's and the nation's premier programs for adult and pediatric patients with central nervous system inflammatory diseases. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has designated us as a Comprehensive Care Center and a Partner in MS Care, acknowledging our expertise and dedication.

Our team consists of renowned specialists in various fields, including neurology, neuro-immunology, autoimmune neurology, neuro-ophthalmology, neuropsychology, neuro-infectious disease, and neuro-rehabilitative medicine. They collaborate closely with specialists from other fields such as urology, gastroenterology, and rheumatology to provide personalized and comprehensive care for our patients.

And the Research They Lead:

Beyond patient care, we are dedicated to advancing the medical understanding of neuroinflammatory diseases and discovering potential cures. UCSF is a leading recipient of research funding from the National Institutes of Health and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Our robust research program provides patients with opportunities to participate in clinical trials and studies that evaluate promising therapies. To learn more about the various research projects at UCSF, please visit our clinical trials website at [UCSF Clinical Trials \(https://clinicaltrials.ucsf.edu/\)](https://clinicaltrials.ucsf.edu/).

Attending Neurologists:

Our attending physicians are world-class neurologists dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment, and research of multiple sclerosis and neuroinflammatory diseases. They lead our physician teams, advance scholarship and science in the field, and make significant contributions to the education of the next generation of neurologists in the field. They are also leaders in the local, national, and international medical and scientific communities.

Fellows:

Fellows at our center are board-certified neurologists who have completed medical school and a 4-year neurology residency and have elected to pursue advanced sub-specialty training in caring for people with multiple sclerosis and other neuroinflammatory disorders. They bring unique clinical and research interests to our program and work under the supervision of faculty physicians to ensure outstanding patient care.

Nurse Practitioner:

A nurse practitioner (NP) is a licensed medical provider with advanced clinical training. The NP in our clinic sees patients for urgent visits, follow-up, disability evaluation support, and performs diagnostic lumbar punctures. NPs collaborate closely with supervising physicians.

Neuropsychologist:

Our licensed neuropsychologist conducts neurocognitive testing to assess changes in cognition, including those that may result from neuroinflammatory processes. Referrals for testing are made by your provider when necessary.

Clinical Pharmacists:

Our clinical pharmacists are board-certified pharmacists who provide patient education on disease-modifying therapies and the management of symptoms using medications. They are also experts in helping to advise about medication access and connecting patients to financial assistance programs for medications when eligible.

Clinical Nursing Team:

Our highly trained registered nurses and licensed vocational nurses are essential to our clinical team and serve on the front line of the care we provide. They assist with symptom assessment, management, triage, medical procedures, patient and caregiver education, clinical forms, and much more.

Neurodiagnostic Technician:

The neurodiagnostic technician team conducts advanced tests and studies, processes referrals, and schedules testing under the direction of neurodiagnostic providers.

Clinical Patient Navigator & Social Worker:

Our clinical patient navigator is a licensed clinical social worker who provides support, helps connect you, your loved ones, and your care-partners to community and national resources, and offers crisis and brief supportive counseling.

Infusion Team:

Our infusion team, comprising a licensed vocational nurse and an administrative coordinator, ensures that necessary steps are completed to enable patients to receive their infusions. They work closely with providers and the central authorization team.

New Practice Coordinator (NPC):

The new practice coordinator processes new referrals, collects required medical information, verifies insurance authorizations, and schedules new patient appointments.

Front Desk Coordinators:

Our front desk staff welcomes you to your appointments, verifies insurance, collects information releases, provides after-visit summaries, and more.

Medical Assistant:

Our medical assistants take your vital signs, update your health information, and ensure your medications and allergies are recorded at each appointment.

Follow-up Practice Coordinators:

Follow-up practice coordinators work closely with your providers and clinical team to schedule appointments, provide information, and facilitate communication with the clinic.

Outgoing Referrals Coordinator:

The outgoing referrals coordinator secures required authorizations for services not handled by the UCSF central authorization team or other facilities. They answer questions about authorizations, the status of authorizations, and referrals in general.

As you can see, it really takes a team to run a clinic, and we are all deeply committed to providing comprehensive and compassionate care to all our patients. If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our team.

An Essential Part of Your Care Team and Our Partner: Your Primary Care Provider:

Your primary care provider (PCP) plays a vital role in your healthcare journey. At the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center, our clinical team collaborates closely with PCPs to ensure the overall health and well-being of our patients. While we are dedicated to providing specialized care for your neuroinflammatory condition, your PCP is best equipped to manage your general health and any other medical issues you may have.

Please note that we do not provide primary care or assume the role of primary care provider as a specialty neurology clinic.

Your PCP has a comprehensive understanding of your overall health and is the ideal person to help you manage health concerns that are not related to your neuroinflammatory diagnosis. If you do not currently have a primary care provider, it is important to establish or reestablish care with one as soon as possible.

How to Find a Primary Care Provider (PCP) on Your Health Plan:

1. Call Member Services: You can find the "Member Services" number on your health insurance card, usually on the back. They can assist you in locating a PCP in your area who is currently accepting new patients.
2. Use the Health Plan Website: Visit your health plan's website and use the "Find a Provider" search tool. Make sure to filter your search by "accepting new patients."

Please note that if you have a commercial HMO or a Managed Medi-Cal plan, your health insurance may require you to have a primary care physician and may automatically assign

one to you. Contact your health plan to find out who your assigned PCP is or to get help in connecting with a new primary care provider.

We are here to support you in managing your neurological condition and to work alongside your primary care provider to ensure you receive the best possible care. If you require additional assistance or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

SECTION 4: Appointments: Types of Appointments/Visits, Scheduling, Rescheduling, And Canceling

We have two main types of appointments at our clinic:

1. New Patient Visits
2. Follow-up Visits

New Patient Visits, Requirements, and Scheduling:

We understand that many patients come to our clinic seeking answers or better treatment after a challenging time. We work hard to process new patient referrals as efficiently as possible (sometimes, insurance authorization to be seen at UCSF delays scheduling, which is beyond our control, but our team remains committed to keeping you updated at every step of the process).

Referral Process: Once your referral is reviewed and accepted, the New Patient Coordinator or another trained scheduler will contact you by phone and/or MyChart message.

- Appointment Availability: New patient appointments are extended visits with a provider. Availability varies by provider.
- Length of the New Patient Appointment: Appointment times can vary, but new appointments typically last between 1 to 2 hours.
- Contacting a Practice Coordinator/Scheduler: You can reach out by calling (415) 353-2273.

Important Forms to Complete Before Your First Visit:

1. UCSF New Patient Intake Questionnaire: Please fill out this questionnaire and send it back to our clinic via MyChart or email it to MSMBNewPatientCoord@ucsf.edu before your appointment.
2. Record Release Form: If you want a family member, caretaker, or another doctor (not your primary care or referring provider) to have access to your health information, please complete this form.

Additional Requirements:

1. Medical Records: Bring or mail all MRIs (brain/spine) or imaging on a disc, along with any additional medical records you want your provider to review.
2. Secure Communication: MyChart, phone calls, traditional mail, and fax.
 1. We use MyChart for secure communication. To log into MyChart or sign up for a new account, please visit: [UCSF MyChart](#)

(<https://ucsfmychart.ucsfmedicalcenter.org/>). Please use MyChart for non-urgent clinical questions or concerns.

2. You can also reach us by telephone at: (415) 353-2273.

Note: The MSMBNewPatientCoord@ucsf.edu email is only used to collect New Patient Questionnaires and is not monitored for other communications. Messages sent to this email may not receive a timely response.

Arrival Time for All Appointments:

- Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to your appointment time for check-in, vitals assessment, and any additional paperwork.

Follow-Up Visits:

Once you are established in our clinic, you and your provider, along with your health insurance plan, will determine the frequency of your future appointments based on your clinical status and treatment plan.

How to schedule Follow-Up Visits:

- In clinic: After your appointment, you will have the option of scheduling your next appointment at the front desk.
- MyChart: Use MyChart to request a non-urgent follow-up appointment.
- Phone: Call the clinic at (415) 353-2273 to schedule.

Other Appointment Types:

We also offer:

- Neuropsychological testing
- Neurodiagnostic testing
- Urgent appointments
- Appointments with our nurse practitioner
- Appointments for disability and other paperwork
- Procedural appointments

In-Person and Telehealth Appointments:

Based on your clinician's recommendation and your preferences (when feasible), your visits may be scheduled in-person or as a telehealth appointment.

Telehealth Appointments:

Before your telehealth appointment, you will receive instructions on how to join the visit. If you encounter any difficulties joining your scheduled appointment, please contact the MyChart Support line at (415) 514-6000. You can also contact our clinic if the difficulties you are encountering will delay you joining your appointment on time: (415) 353-2273.

Important Tips for Appointments:

1. Insurance Information: Ensure we have the correct health insurance information on file. Please inform us if your insurance changes and bring a copy of your insurance card to each visit. You can also update your insurance information by calling the clinic or on MyChart.
2. Care Partner: Consider having a care partner attend your appointment to support you, help take notes or remind you of questions you may want to ask.

Rescheduling Appointments:

- If you need to reschedule your appointment, please send a MyChart message or call the clinic at (415) 353-2273 **at least 72 business hours before** the scheduled visit date and time.

Policy on Late Arrivals:

If you anticipate being late on the day of your appointment due to unforeseen circumstances, please let us know as soon as possible so we can let you know if you will be able to be seen or if you will need to reschedule. Please call (415) 353-2273.

Out of respect for your fellow patients, if you arrive 15 minutes after your scheduled appointment time, the doctor may need to ask to reschedule your appointment, or you may experience a significant delay in being seen.

Late & Cancellation Policy:

If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment, please notify us at least 72 business hours prior to your scheduled appointment. Available appointments are in high demand, and your early cancellation will give another patient the opportunity to have timely care. Any cancellation notice provided to us **less than 72 business hours** before your scheduled appointment will be **considered a NO-SHOW**. If you have 2 or more no-shows, we will not reschedule your appointment.

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to providing you with the best care possible.

SECTION 5: How To Prepare & What to Expect- Before, During & After Your Clinic Visit

Reminder When Planning Your Trip and Appointment Timing:

- Parking can be challenging, so please allow extra time to park if you are not being dropped off or using Valet Services.

What to Bring:

- Your picture ID & health insurance card
- Insurance referrals/authorizations
- List of current medications
- Parking payment
- Any MRI, CT scan, and/or lab results related to your diagnosis: Please bring the discs of your images and the printed reports.
- List of questions and/or notes: To make the most out of your visit, we encourage you to think about your most important questions and write them down ahead of time.

Topics to Consider Discussing with Your Provider:

- New or Worsening Symptoms: Any new or worsening neurological symptoms including, but not limited to, weakness, changes in sensation, visual impairment, imbalance, difficulty walking, falling, double vision, bladder control issues, new constipation, or impaired thinking/memory.
- Changes in medications and/or supplements
- Major changes in your life that may be impacting your health or ability to access care.
- Your experience with medications prescribed by our clinic:
 - Are you experiencing or having any side effects?
 - Do you understand how they work or why they were prescribed?
 - Do you feel like they are helping?
- How are you coping overall? How are you emotionally and mentally?
- Your safety at home:
 - Are you falling more?

- Do you need equipment to help you be as safe as possible in the bathroom?
- Do you live with anyone?
- Is anyone in your home hurting you?

When You Arrive, Before You See Your Provider:

- Check-In: The front desk staff will welcome you, and while there is a kiosk available, all patients need to check in with the front desk staff.
- Vitals: Our medical assistant will take you to a private patient area to take your vitals.
- Private Patient Room: You will be taken to a private patient room where your provider will meet with you. If you bring a caregiver or someone to accompany you, they can join you in the room if you wish.

During Your Visit/Time with a Provider:

- Discuss Concerns and Questions: You will be given time to discuss your concerns and questions.
- Review of Recent Labs and Imaging: Your recent lab results and imaging studies will be reviewed.
- Physical and Neurological Examination: A physical and neurological examination will be performed to better understand your concerns.
- Review Treatment Plan: Your clinician will review your treatment plan and the next steps in your care.
- Teaching Health Care System: As a teaching hospital & health care system, residents or medical students may assist in some of your visits under physician supervision. If you are not comfortable with this, please notify your team.

Follow-Up Appointment:

- Appointment Times: Follow-up appointment times can vary from 30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on your clinician's schedule. Please be mindful of these time limits. If you run out of time, you may need to schedule an additional appointment to discuss further concerns.

After Your Clinic Visit:

- Check-Out: After your appointment is over, you will check out at the front desk.
- After Visit Summary: You will be provided with an After Visit Summary (AVS). This document contains a summary of your health, the treatment plan that you and your provider have agreed upon, and a guide for future care, including self-management tasks.

- **Schedule Next Follow-Up:** You are encouraged to schedule your next follow-up appointment at this time.
- **Feedback Survey:** We have an iPad available for you to complete a brief survey about your visit. We appreciate your feedback and take each patient's comments and ratings seriously.

Refilling Your Medication:

To ensure you get your medications when you need them, please allow:

- **4 to 5 days** for **non-disease modifying medications**
- **2 weeks** for **disease-modifying medications/therapies** or other **specialty medications**

Important Reminders:

- For most disease-modifying therapies, labs need to be done every several months to ensure it is safe to continue. If you have any questions about the timing of your blood work/labs or how often you need lab work done, please talk with your neurologist or ask one of our nurses.
- We can only refill medications prescribed by our providers. For other medications prescribed by other providers, please contact that prescribing physician or clinic for refills.

SECTION 6: Reporting Symptoms

Who to Call First: Primary Care vs. MS & Neuroinflammation Neurologist:

We are deeply committed to your care at the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center. However, your primary care provider (PCP) is typically better equipped to handle health concerns outside of your MS or neuroinflammatory diagnosis. Your PCP has a comprehensive understanding of your overall health and can manage broader health issues and symptoms that are not related to your neuroinflammatory condition.

While we want to be informed about any significant changes in your health, we are not the best resource for non-neuroinflammatory issues that need immediate attention. We are always happy to collaborate with your broader healthcare team to ensure you receive the best possible care. If you do not currently have a primary care provider, we strongly recommend establishing care with one. Please let your neurologist or our team know if you need assistance in finding a primary care provider.

When to Contact Your Primary Care Provider (PCP):

Symptoms/Issues	Provider
COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 symptoms	PCP/Urgent Care
Cold symptoms (cough, nasal congestion, fever, sinus infection, sore throat, Strep throat, earache, conjunctivitis)	PCP
Acne or pre-existing skin conditions (warts, eczema)	PCP
Podiatry issues (foot and toe pain)	PCP
Arthritis or pre-existing joint pain	PCP
Urinary tract infections (UTI) or bladder infections	PCP/Urologist
Constipation (pre-existing)	PCP/Gastroenterologist
Wounds	PCP/Urgent Care/Emergency Department
Renewal of medications/prescriptions not prescribed by your MS/Neuroinflammation Neurologist (including pain management and psychotropic medications)	PCP or the prescribing physician
Nausea and vomiting (due to a virus, “bug” or food poisoning)	PCP/Urgent Care/Emergency Department
Lab tests for conditions not managed by our clinic	PCP or ordering physician

Symptoms/Issues	Provider
Routine tests for screenings and monitoring of conditions not related to MS or neuroinflammatory diagnosis (e.g., colonoscopies, mammograms)	PCP
Referrals to other specialties not directly managed by our clinic (e.g., allergist, dermatologist, endocrinologist, optometrist for glasses/contacts)	PCP

How to Report Neurological and Other Symptoms to Our Clinic:

For any emergency or life-threatening symptoms, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Department/Hospital.

Please call the MS & Neuroinflammation clinic if you experience any new or worsening neurological symptoms, including but not limited to:

- Weakness
- Changes in sensation
- Visual impairment
- Imbalance and incoordination
- Difficulty walking or falling
- Double vision
- Loss of bladder control (leakage, urgency, or accidents)
- New onset constipation
- Impaired thinking or memory

These types of symptoms and other concerning symptoms require a call to our clinic and should not be communicated to our clinic via MyChart. We are available by phone Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, except for holidays. Our clinic number is (415) 353-2273.

SECTION 7: MyChart

MyChart: Your Online Patient Portal:

UCSF MyChart gives you access to your online medical records and is an effective way to communicate with members of your care team. You can access it on the web or download the MyChart app onto your phone or other electronic device.

What UCSF MyChart Allows You to Do:

- View your health information and test results.
- Communicate with your healthcare team.
- View your upcoming appointments.
- View your After-Visit Summary (AVS) and visit notes.
- Refill medications.
- Schedule some appointments.
- Review and pay bills.
- Fill out forms and questionnaires prior to your appointment so they can be reviewed by your provider before you are seen.
 - If it is difficult for you to fill out the forms in English, you can arrive early to your appointment and request a medical interpreter to help you complete the forms.

You can connect to MyChart at ucsfhealth.org/mychart and get further assistance by calling (415) 514-6000.

MyChart:

To sign up for MyChart, you will need an activation code. You can request this code during your appointment, find it on your After-Visit Summary (AVS) report, or obtain it by calling MyChart customer service at (415) 514-6000. You can also log into the MyChart website at ucsfmychart.org to obtain an activation code.

If you have any trouble signing up, call MyChart customer service at (415) 514-6000 or ask for help at the front desk.

Response Time and Things to Keep in Mind about MyChart:

- MyChart **should not be used to communicate urgent or emergent symptoms.** For any emergency or life-threatening symptoms, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Department/Hospital.

- It may take 2 to 3 business days to receive a response to your message
- If your question is felt to be too complex to address in MyChart, you may be asked to schedule an appointment
- Most messages are free. However, if a response requires medical expertise and more than a few minutes of your health care provider's time, it may be billed to your insurance (which sometimes has a co-pay).
- MyChart messages are part of your medical record and visible to your other UCSF medical providers.

Designating a Proxy – Having a Trusted Person

If you have trouble using MyChart or want a trusted friend or family member to be able to log into your MyChart account to view your health information and communicate with your doctors, you may designate your trusted loved one as a proxy.

To Designate a Proxy, You Will Need to:

Steps to Add a Proxy Online in UCSF MyChart:

1. Log in to Your UCSF MyChart Account:
 - Go to [UCSF MyChart](#).
 - Enter your username and password to log in.
2. Navigate to the Proxy Access Section:
 - Once logged in, click on the Menu (three horizontal lines in the top left corner).
 - Under Sharing or Personalize, look for the option labeled Request Family Access or Proxy Access and click on it.
3. Select the Type of Proxy Access Needed:
 - Choose the appropriate option based on the person you are granting access to (e.g., parent, guardian, spouse, or caregiver).
 - Follow the prompts to specify if the proxy is for an adult or child and provide any required details.
4. Submit the Request Electronically:
 - Fill out the required information about the proxy (e.g., their name, email address, and relationship to you).
 - Review and agree to UCSF's terms for proxy access.
 - Submit your request electronically.

5. Verification and Approval:

- UCSF will review your request, and the proxy will typically receive an email invitation to set up their own MyChart account with access to your records.
- In some cases, additional verification steps may be required, such as confirming your identity or the proxy's identity.

If the steps above do not work for you, you may need to complete a Proxy Authorization Form:

- Fill out a Proxy Authorization Form, where you will provide the contact information of the friend or family member you have chosen. That person will then receive an email with a link allowing them to sign up to your MyChart account.
- You can obtain the Proxy Authorization Form by:
 - Visiting the MyChart website at ucsfhealth.org/mychart
 - Calling the MyChart office at (415) 514-6000
 - Asking for a copy at the front desk

We hope you find UCSF MyChart useful for managing your healthcare and staying connected with your care team.

SECTION 8: Financial Services & Questions About Bills

Patient Financial Services Office:

Health Insurance:

If you have health insurance, our billing office will first bill your insurance carrier. If your insurance plan does not cover a service or procedure or does not cover the entire cost, you will be responsible for the fees that are not covered.

If you need to update your insurance information for billing, please call Patient Financial Services immediately, as most insurance companies have timely filing requirements.

How Patient Financial Services Can Help You:

After your appointment and once you have received your bill, Patient Financial Services can assist you with:

- Understanding your statement balance
- Arranging a payment plan
- Getting financial assistance (if you qualify): Those with a family income at or below 400% of federal poverty guidelines generally qualify for assistance, where a portion of your medical bill is forgiven and written off.

Contact Information for UCSF Health Patient Financial Services:

- Phone: (415) 353-3333 or (866) 433-4035 (Toll Free)
- MyChart Messaging: You can also communicate through MyChart messaging.
- Website: [UCSF Health Billing and Insurance](https://www.ucsfhealth.org/billing-and-insurance) or [ucsfhealth.org/billing-and-insurance](https://www.ucsfhealth.org/billing-and-insurance)

Estimate Your Out-of-Pocket Costs:

At UCSF Health, we are committed to helping patients and their families make informed decisions about every aspect of their care, including out-of-pocket costs. Costs will be impacted by your insurance plan coverage, co-pays, and deductibles, as well as by the wide range of services provided and other variables that affect costs.

Use our online tool to help calculate out-of-pocket costs for our most common services:

- Get a price estimate online: [UCSF MyChart Guest Estimates](https://ucsfmychart.ucsfmedicalcenter.org/UCSFMyChart/GuestEstimates/) or <https://ucsfmychart.ucsfmedicalcenter.org/UCSFMyChart/GuestEstimates/>

Need Assistance:

Financial counselors are available to discuss your options and offer guidance in the financial planning of your medical care or services. Contact a financial counselor at the Patient Estimate Program:

- Phone: (844) 678-6831 or Email: patientestimate@ucsf.edu

Self-Pay Patients:

If you do not have health insurance or are seeking care that is not covered by your insurance plan, you are considered a self-paying patient. All self-pay patients at UCSF are eligible for a discount. For additional information about our discount policy, please call the Financial Counseling office: (415) 353-1966

To request an estimate for the out-of-pocket cost for an upcoming service, please contact the Financial Counseling's Patient Estimate Program: (844) 678-6831

Financial Assistance:

If UCSF Patient Financial Services has advised you to apply for financial assistance, please complete a financial assistance application using UCSF's MyChart. Families with an income, at or below 400% of the federal poverty guidelines generally qualify for 100% assistance.

An Application for Charity Assistance should be completed after services are provided and is not a substitute for insurance or a guarantee of future services.

Please reach out directly to UCSF Patient Financial Services with any questions or concerns.

SECTION 9: Patient Education, Guidelines & How To

New Infusions: General Timeline and Guide:

You and your provider may have decided that a disease-modifying therapy or treatment administered through an infusion is appropriate for you at this time. Setting up your first infusion involves several steps and typically takes several weeks to complete the entire process. Below is a general timeline and overview of the steps involved in setting up your first infusion. If you have specific questions about the medication, please ask your provider. If you need help or have any questions about the process, please see the contact information at the end of this document.

New Start Infusions:

Timeline for a New Start Infusion:

Once you and your provider have agreed upon your disease-modifying medication and it has been prescribed, it usually takes a minimum of 2-4 weeks for everything to be completed and approved by your insurance plan so that you may be scheduled for your first infusion.

Steps for You to Take:

1. Get Required Safety Labs Done:

- Once your neurologist places the order for your bloodwork, get your required safety labs done as soon as you can.
- If you do not see your order in MyChart or are not provided with your order within 72 hours of your appointment, please send the clinic a MyChart message.
- Your provider must review your lab results before any additional steps can be taken.

2. Choose Your Infusion Site:

- Inform the MS & Neuroinflammation Infusion Team where you want to go. You can reach the Infusion Team through our main clinic: (415) 353-2273
- We will give you some options based on your insurance plan, such as UCSF Adult Infusion at the Weill Institute for Neurosciences or a site closer to your home.

3. Complete Recommended Vaccinations:

- Make sure you complete any vaccinations recommended by your neurologist as soon as possible. Recommended vaccinations typically need to be done at least 2-6 weeks before your infusion depending on the vaccine.

4. Confirm receipt of infusion referral and infusion appointment date.

- Please send a MyChart message or call our clinic with your infusion date so our staff can update your medical chart.

5. Verify your authorization is in place before your appointment.

- Please verify with your infusion center that your insurance authorization is in place before your infusion appointment. If you are getting your infusion at UCSF, please call 415-353-7155 to obtain the status of your authorization.

Steps the Infusion Team Takes:

1. Confirms Your Infusion Site Choice:
 - The team will confirm your choice of where you want to go for your infusion.
2. Sends Bloodwork Lab Order:
 - The team will send you the lab order for your bloodwork.
3. Finalizes Your Specific Therapy Plan:
 - Once your lab results have been received, the team finalizes your specific therapy plan with your provider and obtains all needed orders.
4. Obtains Insurance Authorizations:
 - The centralized authorization team obtains any required insurance authorizations if infused at UCSF. Non-UCSF infusion centers may have their own team to work on insurance authorizations.
5. Addresses Additional Insurance Requirements:
 - If your insurance plan requires additional steps, the authorization team and the MS & Neuroinflammation team work to address these requirements.
6. Sends Referral Packets:
 - Completes and sends referral packets with orders and your treatment plan to the infusion site/location where you will get infused.

Potential Delays:

- Blood Work/Labs Not Done:
 - If blood work/labs are not done or not sent to the Infusion Team.
 - Added: Please note, if our clinic does not receive your lab results from non-UCSF labs, you will need to contact the lab site to obtain your results and to fax them over to our clinic: 415-353-2633.
- Insurance Requirements:
 - Your health insurance plan may require additional documentation before approving the infusion site or medication.

- If you received your first few infusions at a hospital-affiliated infusion site, your insurance plan may require you to transition to a non-hospital licensed site at some point. The Infusion Team will notify you and work to set you up at an infusion site covered by your insurance.
- Insurance Requesting a Biosimilar:
 - Depending on your treatment, your insurance may require you to receive an infusion of a biosimilar instead of the brand-name medication. Biosimilars are essentially generic forms of monoclonal antibody treatments and related medications known as biologics. Biosimilars undergo extensive testing before FDA approval to ensure they function in the same way, act on the same sites, at the same dose, and are removed in the same way by the body as the reference medication. Biosimilars like generic drugs can lower the cost of care for patients and the healthcare system. Our providers and the UCSF Health formulary support the use of biosimilars for most patients. Please check with your provider if you have any questions about biosimilars. You can also find more information here: [FDA Biosimilar Basics for Patients](#).

Important Contact Numbers:

- Infusion Team: 415-353-2273
- Clinical Patient Navigator: 415-514-6442
- Adult Infusion at the Weill Institute: 415-353-7155
- Blood Draw Lab at the Weill Institute: 415-502-9392
- UCSF Berkeley Infusion Center: 510-420-8000

Ongoing/Retreat Infusions: General Timeline and Guide

Below are general guidelines and steps for patients continuing with infusions. The process and timelines for ongoing infusions depend on the medication you are receiving.

Please note, if you received your first infusion at UCSF, depending on your health insurance, after 1-3 infusions, your health plan may require you to transition to another site. The Infusion Team will notify you if this is the case and will work with you to set you up at an infusion site covered by your insurance.

Retreat Infusion Timeline and Steps:

- **A Month Before Your Infusion:**
 - The frequency of your infusions will depend on the medication you are taking and your treatment plan.

- You will be asked to schedule your infusion, and you may be asked to complete labs, if labs are needed.
 - If labs are needed, the orders will be placed about a month before your infusion is due.
- The infusion team sends your lab orders to you via MyChart (if you have an active account) or through the mail to the physical address on file.
- During this time, if you receive your infusion at a UCSF Infusion Center, the central authorization team will also work on securing your insurance authorization. If you receive your infusion elsewhere, the facility will handle the insurance approval if required.

Steps for You to Take:

1. Get Required Labs Done, If Needed:

- For any required labwork: Once your neurologist places the order for your bloodwork, please get them done as soon as you can.
- When labs are needed, your provider must review your lab results before any additional steps can be taken.

2. Update the Infusion Team:

- After you get your bloodwork/labs done, please send a MyChart message (or call) to update the Infusion Team that your labs are done. Our team will then follow up if necessary and ensure your results are in our system.

3. Schedule or Confirm Your Infusion Appointment:

- Once we receive any needed lab results, the orders for your infusion are finalized, and the insurance authorization/approval is in place, you will be notified. You will need to schedule your infusion time or confirm the appointment if previously scheduled.

Steps Our Internal Infusion Team Takes:

1. Sends Lab Orders:

- Sends you any required lab orders about a month before your next infusion.

2. Reviews Lab Results:

- When labs are needed, ensures your lab results are reviewed by the physician once received.

3. Follow-ups on Labs:

- Follows up on labs, if needed.

4. Finalizes Infusion Orders:

- Your provider will sign your infusion orders and finalize your specific therapy plan with the team.

5. Sends Orders to Infusion Center:
 - Orders and your specific therapy plan are sent to your infusion center once signed.
6. Secures Insurance Authorizations:
 - While the above steps are taking place, the centralized authorization team and our infusion team work to secure any required insurance authorizations.
7. Addresses Additional Insurance Requirements:
 - If your insurance plan requires additional steps, the authorization team and the MS & Neuroinflammation team work to address these requirements.
8. Confirms Infusion Appointment:
 - Confirms the infusion site and the date of the infusion appointment once you have scheduled.

Potential Delays:

- Blood Work/Labs Not Done:
 - If blood work/labs are not done or not sent to the infusion team.
- Insurance Requirements:
 - Your health insurance plan may require additional documentation before approving the infusion site or medication.
 - If you received your first few infusions at a hospital-affiliated infusion site, your insurance plan may require you to transition to a non-hospital licensed site at some point. The infusion team will notify you and work to set you up at an infusion site covered by your insurance.
- Insurance Requesting a Biosimilar:
 - See above information covered in the New Start Infusion document.

Important Contact Numbers:

- Infusion Team: 415-353-2273
- Clinical Patient Navigator: 415-514-6442
- Adult Infusion at the Weill Institute: 415-353-7155
- Blood Draw Lab at the Weill Institute: 415-502-9392
- UCSF Berkeley Infusion Center: 510-420-8000

The “How To” for Finding Providers, Services & Durable Medical Equipment (DME) You Need:

Sometimes, our providers may recommend additional services, tests, or follow-up care that need to take place outside of the UCSF Health System. This might include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, or other services. Below are step-by-step instructions to help you find a service provider who accepts your health insurance plan.

Please note: Authorization for a UCSF Health provider or service will be handled by UCSF.

Patient Instructions: What to Do When Given a Referral for a Service or Treatment Outside of UCSF Health or for a Local Provider:

Step 1: Find a Place Covered by Your Insurance

Ways to get a list of service providers that accept your health plan:

- Call the “Member Services” number on your insurance card: This number is often found on the back of your card.
- Use the “Find a Provider” search tool on your insurance plan’s website: This tool is available for Medicare and Medi-Cal plans as well.
- Call your primary care provider: Ask for a list of providers/agencies within your health plan network.

Step 2: How to ensure that the service or provider is covered by your health plan:

- Call the provider or clinic: Ask if they accept your insurance.
- Ask about your insurance coverage: Do you have a co-pay? If so, how much?
- Inquire if an insurance authorization is required: Find out if the clinic or provider will get the authorization for you.
- If they will not get the authorization for you: Call the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Outgoing Referrals Coordinator at (415) 353-2273.
- Bring necessary documents to your appointment: Bring the referral that was mailed to you or sent via MyChart, and your insurance card.

Note for Medicare Patients:

- Original Medicare (Part A & B): Call 800-633-4227 or use the Medicare website to search for providers and services: [Medicare Care Compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/) (<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>)

- Medicare Advantage Plan: Contact your plan to find providers/services covered by your plan using the number on your insurance card.
- Primary care physician's office: Can also provide names of providers and facilities that accept Medicare.

Important UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Numbers:

- For help with authorizations for services:
 - Outgoing Referral Coordinator: (415) 353-2273
- For help with locating service providers:
 - Clinical Patient Navigator: (415) 514-6442

Finding Durable Medical Equipment (DME):

Sometimes, our providers will recommend and prescribe durable medical equipment (DME) for you to use. Examples of DME include walkers, wheelchairs, canes, shower chairs, pressure mattresses, lifts, oxygen tanks, and more. Below you will find step-by-step instructions on how to find a company that accepts your health plan so you can get the DME you need.

Please note: Not all DME is covered by health insurance.

Patient Instructions: Getting the DME Prescribed for You

Step 1: Find a Company Covered by Your Insurance

Ways to get a list of DME companies that take your health plan:

- Call the “Member Services” number on your insurance card: This number is often found on the back of your card.
- Use the “Find a Provider” search tool on your insurance plan’s website: Some health insurance plans, including many Medi-Cal plans, provide a search option to look for places that can fill DME orders.
- Check physical copies of your health plan’s member directories: Available on health plan websites, these directories also include companies you can use to get your DME.
- Call your primary care provider: Ask for a list of DME companies within your health plan network.

For Medicare Providers and Services:

- Original Medicare (Part A & B):
 - Call: 800-633-4227
 - Use the Medicare supplier locator tool: [Medicare Supplier Directory \(https://www.medicare.gov/supplierdirectory/search.html\)](https://www.medicare.gov/supplierdirectory/search.html)
- Medicare Advantage Plan: Contact your plan to find DME companies covered by your plan using the number on your insurance card.

Step 2: Get Evaluated for DME (Wheelchairs & Other Mobility Devices)

Wheelchairs and some other mobility devices require an extra step before your insurance will pay for them:

- Evaluation by a physical therapist or other provider: Ensure that the right wheelchair or device is being ordered and that it fits your height, weight, and needs.

- Schedule the required physical therapy evaluation as soon as possible: The sooner the evaluation is completed, the sooner your order can be filled.
- Follow-up with the DME company: There can be a long wait time for receiving your wheelchair. Make sure your order does not get needlessly delayed.

Step 3: How to make sure your DME will be covered by your health plan:

- Call the DME company: Ask if they have the specific equipment you need, if they accept your insurance, and if they will bill your health plan for the equipment.
- Inquire about co-pays: Ask if you have a co-pay and how much it will be.
- Ask if an insurance authorization is required: Find out if the DME company will get the authorization for you.
- If the DME company will not get the authorization for you: Call the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Outgoing Referrals Coordinator at (415) 353-2069.
- Provide necessary documents: Give the DME company the order for the requested equipment that was mailed to you or sent via MyChart, and your health insurance plan information.

Resources:

- Multiple Sclerosis Foundation: 888-MSFOCUS (673-6287) | [MS Focus Get Help \(https://msfocus.org/Get-Help.aspx\)](https://msfocus.org/Get-Help.aspx)
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society: 1-800-344-4867 | [Medical Assistive Equipment \(https://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Find-Doctors-Resources/Guides/Medical-Assistive-Equipment\)](https://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Find-Doctors-Resources/Guides/Medical-Assistive-Equipment)
- California Health Advocates: 800-434-0222 | [Durable Medical Equipment Coverage \(https://cahealthadvocates.org/medicares-coverage-of-durable-medical-equipment/\)](https://cahealthadvocates.org/medicares-coverage-of-durable-medical-equipment/)
- HealthGrades Overview Resource: [Paying for Your MS Assistive Device \(https://www.healthgrades.com/right-care/multiple-sclerosis/paying-for-your-ms-assistive-device\)](https://www.healthgrades.com/right-care/multiple-sclerosis/paying-for-your-ms-assistive-device)

Important UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Numbers:

- For help with authorizations for DME equipment:
 - Outgoing Referral Coordinator: (415) 353-2273
- For help with locating DME companies:
 - Clinical Patient Navigator: (415) 514-6442

MRIs & Imaging:

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a highly sensitive, non-invasive diagnostic tool used to image the brain, spinal cord, and other areas of the body. Neurologists frequently use MRIs to diagnose and monitor multiple sclerosis (MS) and other neuroinflammatory disorders, providing crucial clinical information.

How MRIs Work:

Unlike CT scans or conventional X-rays, MRI does not use radiation. Instead, MRI uses magnetic fields and radio waves to measure the relative water content in tissues. Here's how it works:

1. **Magnetic Field Alignment:** A strong magnetic field causes a small percentage of the hydrogen protons in water molecules to align with the magnetic field.
2. **Radio Waves Disruption:** Radio waves and additional, weaker magnetic fields knock the protons out of alignment.
3. **Signal Detection:** When the radio waves stop, the protons relax back into alignment, releasing resonance signals.
4. **Image Creation:** These signals are transmitted to a computer, analyzed, and converted into an image.

Please visit the UCSF Radiology website to learn more about MRIs:

<https://radiology.ucsf.edu/patient-care/services/mri>

To learn more about how to prepare for a MRI and MRI Safety Guidelines, please visit:

- <https://radiology.ucsf.edu/patient-care/prepare/mri>
- <https://radiology.ucsf.edu/patient-care/patient-safety/mri>

Key Point to Remember: Please tell your neurologist if you are claustrophobic before they place your MRI order. Notifying your neurologist in advance allows them time to work with you to identify available options/solutions.

The Importance of Previous Images:

It is crucial for our team to access both new and previous MRI images and reports. If you have completed any prior MRIs at non-UCSF facilities, please provide a CD copy of those images to our clinic. This allows the neuroradiologist and your neurologist to compare new MRIs with prior scans, helping detect any changes.

Patient Instructions: Getting the MRI Ordered for You

Step 1: Find an Imaging Center Covered by Your Insurance

Ways to get a list of MRI and imaging centers that accept your health plan:

- Call the “Member Services” number on your insurance card: Often found on the back of your card.
- Use the “Find a Provider” search tool on your insurance plan’s website: This tool is available for Medicare and Medi-Cal plans as well.
- Call your primary care provider: Ask for a list of imaging centers within your health plan network.

Step 2: How to make sure the imaging center is covered by your health plan:

- Call the imaging center: Ask if they accept your insurance.
- Inquire about coverage: Do you have a co-pay? If so, how much?
- Ask about insurance authorization: Find out if pre-authorization is required.
- If authorization is needed: Ask if the imaging center will obtain it for you. If not, contact the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Outgoing Referrals Coordinator at (415) 353-2273.
- Provide necessary documents: Give the imaging center the MRI order sent to you via MyChart or mail and bring your insurance card to the appointment.

For Medicare Providers and Services:

- Original Medicare (Part A & B): Call 800-633-4227 or use the [Medicare Care Compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/) (<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>) website to find providers.
- Medicare Advantage Plan: Contact your plan using the number on your insurance card.
- Primary care physician’s office: Your PCP can also provide names of imaging centers that accept Medicare.

Step 3: Ensure Your Neurologist Can View the Report & Images Before Your Appointment

If you have your MRI done at a UCSF facility, your neurologist will automatically have access to the report and images. If done outside UCSF, follow these steps:

- Ask the imaging center: Ensure they can share the report and images with UCSF electronically. If not:
 - Fax and Mail: Ask the center to fax and mail a copy of the images and the report to our clinic.
 - FAX TO: (415) 353-2633

- MAIL TO: UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center, 1651 4th Street, Suite 252, San Francisco, CA 94158
- Get a copy of your images for you: Ensure the imaging center gives you a CD copy of the images before you leave.
- Bring CD to Appointment: Bring the CD copy of the images to your next clinic appointment.

Providing Previous Images:

When going to a new or different imaging facility, bring a CD of your previous MRI images and reports.

Steps:

1. Contact Previous Facilities: Request a copy of your prior images and reports on a CD.
2. Bring CDs: Bring the CDs to your MRI appointment and clinic visit.

Important UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Numbers:

- UCSF Weill Building MRI Scheduling: (415) 502-9386
- UCSF Radiology Scheduling: (415) 353-3900
- UCSF Neuro Radiology (CT Guided LP's) Scheduling: (415) 502-1977 or Email: CT.Spine.Scheduling@ucsf.edu
- UCSF Radiology Authorizations & Price Estimates: (415) 514-8888
- For help with authorizations: Outgoing Referrals Coordinator (415) 353-2273
- For help with locating imaging centers: Clinical Patient Navigator (415) 514-6442

Mental Health Therapists, Support Groups, and Services:

Whether you are in the process of being diagnosed, newly diagnosed, coping with MS or a neuroinflammatory disorder, facing disease progression, or dealing with the grief that accompanies living with acute and chronic illnesses, mental health support is essential to your overall well-being. No one can do this alone. We encourage you to reach out to loved ones, professionals, our staff, and anyone who can offer support and resources. Below, you will find step-by-step instructions on how to locate a mental health provider covered by your insurance. The earlier you start looking for a mental health provider, the sooner you can get the services you need.

In addition to working with a mental health therapist, many support groups and online resources can be helpful. Trusted organizations like the Siegel Rare Neuroimmune Association, the National Organization of Rare Diseases (NORD), the National MS Society, and the Sumaira Foundation offer lists of support groups. You can also ask our Clinical Patient Navigator about various support groups and trusted online resources.

Patient Instructions: Seeking a Mental Health Therapist

Crisis or Emergency:

- In an emergency: Call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest hospital.
- For a mental health or substance use crisis: Call 9-8-8 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255), the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Chat is available at [988 Lifeline](https://988lifeline.org/) (<https://988lifeline.org/>).

Step 1: Finding a Provider

Here are some ways to get a list of mental health providers that accept your health plan:

- Call the “Member Services” Number on Your Insurance Card
 - Look for the **Member Services** phone number, often located on the back of your insurance card.
 - Call and ask for a list of mental health providers who are accepting new patients.
- Check for a “Mental Health” or “Behavioral Health Services” Number
 - Some insurance cards include a specific phone number for mental health services.
 - If this number is listed, call it to request help finding services or a provider.
- Use the “Find a Provider” Search Tool on Your Health Insurance Plan’s Website
 - Most health plans, including Medicare and Medi-Cal, offer online search tools to help you find providers.
 - Be sure to select your specific health plan or network when searching. This ensures you get accurate results and avoid seeing providers outside your coverage.

- Contact Your Primary Care Provider
 - Your primary care doctor can be a great resource.
 - Ask them for a list of therapists or psychiatrists within your health plan's network.
- Use Internet Search Engines
 - You can also use search engines to find providers who accept your health plan. Please see some resources below.

Additional Options If You Have Medi-Cal:

- You can also call the county behavioral health phone number for your county.
- Call "211" to get the number to your local county mental health access number.

Medicare Specific Options & Tips:

- Original Medicare (Part A & B):
 - Call the Medicare Helpline at 800-633-4227
 - Use the Medicare website to search for providers and services: [Medicare Care Compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/) (<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>)
 - Use a live "Chat". Go to the official [Medicare.gov Talk to Someone](https://www.medicare.gov/talk-to-someone) page. Website: <https://www.medicare.gov/talk-to-someone>
 - Internet search engines like Psychology Today & telehealth mental health companies: Use these to find providers who accept Medicare. (see resources below).
- Medicare Advantage Plan: Contact your plan to find mental health providers/services covered by your plan.

Step 2: Ensure the Therapist or Psychiatrist Takes Your Insurance

How to make sure that the service or provider is covered by your health plan:

- Call the mental health clinic or provider: Ask if they accept your insurance.
- Inquire about insurance coverage: Do you have a co-pay? If so, how much?
- Verify billing information: Ensure the mental health clinic or provider has what they need to bill your insurance.
- Referral requirements: Many health plans do not require a referral to see a psychiatrist, even when they require one for other specialists. However, if your plan does require a referral, ask your primary care doctor to refer you.
- Bring your health insurance card: Take it with you to the appointment.

Finding the right mental health provider is a process, and it's okay to try out different therapists until you find the one that is the best fit for you. If you have any questions or need assistance, please reach out to our team.

Websites and Other Resources for Finding Mental Health Providers: *This list does not include all available resources:*

Search Engines:

- Psychology Today: [Therapists, Psychologists & Psychiatrists](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/california) (with filter by insurance option); <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/california>
- Good Therapy: [Good Therapy](https://www.goodtherapy.org/) (<https://www.goodtherapy.org/>)
- American Psychiatric Association: American Psychiatric Association (www.psych.org)
- American Psychological Association: American Psychological Association (www.apa.org)
- Inclusive Therapists: [Inclusive Therapists](https://www.inclusivetherapists.com) | BIPOC LGBTQ Therapists Near Me and Online (<https://www.inclusivetherapists.com>)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [NAMI Support & Education](https://www.nami.org/Support-Education) (<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education>) | [Identity and Cultural Dimensions](https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions) (<https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Identity-and-Cultural-Dimensions>)
- National Multiple Sclerosis Society: [Find Doctors & Resources](https://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Find-Doctors-Resources) (<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Find-Doctors-Resources>) | Call 800-344-4867
- Dial “211” or visit: [211](http://www.211.org) (www.211.org) for resources and referrals
- California Department of Health Care Services: [List of County Mental Health Numbers](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/MHPCContactList.aspx) (<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/individuals/Pages/MHPCContactList.aspx>) | [Mental Health Programs & Services](https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/MentalHealthPrograms-Svcs.aspx) (<https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/Pages/MentalHealthPrograms-Svcs.aspx>)

UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center Support: Please contact our Clinical Patient Navigator: (415) 514-6442.

How to Determine if a Mental Health Provider is a “Good Fit”:

Finding a mental health provider that is a “good fit” involves considering objective factors and logistics as well as personal preferences. This is not an exhaustive list or guide, but here are some helpful items to consider:

Objective Factors and Logistics:

- Insurance Coverage: Are they covered by your insurance, and can you afford their fee?
- Availability: Do they have availability that works with your schedule?
- Type of Care: Are they offering the type of care you need (therapy, medication management, both)?
- Mode of Service: Are they offering services how you prefer: in-person, via telehealth, or both?
- Credentials: Are they credentialed and in good standing with their licensing boards?

- Specialization: Do they specialize in the issues you want to discuss (depression, anxiety, chronic illness, trauma, substance dependence, relationship issues, grief, etc.)?

Personal Preferences:

- Demographic Preferences: If you prefer a therapist with a similar or different background (ethnicity, language, faith, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) from you, look for providers who meet this criterion.
- Comfort and Trust: Do you feel comfortable with this person, and do you feel like you could trust them?
- Empathy and Understanding: Do they seem empathetic and understanding, and are they good listeners?
- Personality Fit: Do your personalities mesh well? Do you feel a connection?
- Effectiveness: After 2-3 sessions, assess whether you believe this therapist can be helpful to you.

Effective Therapy Types for MS and Neuroinflammatory Diseases:

Unfortunately, very few therapists specialize in Multiple Sclerosis or Neuroinflammatory diseases. However, some do exist, but more importantly a therapist does not need to specialize in MS or a neuroinflammatory disease in order to be highly effective. Read more information below about what research has shown regarding effective therapy.

You can find some therapists that specialize or have a special interest in working with those with MS on the National MS Society “Find a provider” search tool. This can be helpful even if you do not have MS, but have another neuroinflammatory diagnosis, because these providers have experience in working with clients with neuroinflammatory diseases. You can also ask your neurologist, support groups or other non-profit organizations dedicated to your diagnosis/disease.

The National MS society and other trusted organizations also have information for mental health providers so that any provider can get important information about how MS and other neuroinflammatory diseases may impact a person’s mental health. Additionally, with your consent, our clinical patient navigator and social worker is happy to work with your therapist to ensure that they have the information they need to better understand how your neuroinflammatory disease impacts your mental health.

Research has found certain types of therapy to be effective for patients with depression and anxiety, and for people living with MS and neuroinflammatory diseases:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Mindfulness-based interventions
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

Helpful Experience or Expertise:

- Depression

- Anxiety
- Chronic illnesses/disabilities
- Grief
- Chronic Pain
- Relationship Issues/Family Dynamics
- Adjustment disorders
- Trauma

Leaves of Absence & Disability Benefits:

This section provides a brief overview of disability programs, leaves of absence, and how we can assist with the medical verification portions of your application process. This is not a comprehensive explanation of these programs, nor is it a guide on applying or a replacement for the necessary research to determine your eligibility. We understand that this can be confusing and overwhelming. We are here to help connect you with resources as needed.

Types of Disability Insurance:

Disability insurance may be provided by private companies or employers or through government programs. It's essential to understand your eligibility to plan for the future and minimize stress.

Private Disability Insurance:

- Group Disability Insurance: Often purchased through your employer.
- Individual Disability Insurance: Purchased on your own.

Contact your Human Resources Department or the insurance company for more information on these programs.

Government Disability Programs:

There are three main government disability programs: SDI (Short-Term Disability), SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance), and SSI (Supplemental Security Income).

Here are some general differences:

Program	Run By	Waiting Period (Estimated)	Duration of Benefits (Estimated)	Eligibility Requirements	Where to Learn More
SDI/DI (Short-term)	State (CA)	1+ week(s)	6 month(s) to a year	Disability & work credits; payment into system	EDD
SSDI	Federal Govt.	5+ months	May last multiple years	Disability & work credits; payment into system	SSA

Program	Run By	Waiting Period (Estimated)	Duration of Benefits (Estimated)	Eligibility Requirements	Where to Learn More
SSI	Federal Govt.	3-5+ months for a decision	May last until retirement	Disability & income/resources	SSA

State of California (EDD) & SDI (State Disability Insurance):

The California State Disability Insurance (SDI) program provides Short-term Disability Insurance (DI) and Paid Family Leave (PFL) wage replacement benefits to eligible workers.

- State Disability Insurance (SDI) provides partial wage replacement benefits to workers unable to work due to non-work-related illness, injury, or pregnancy. DI requires that a person has earned “work credits” or “paid into” the system; frequently done through employee payroll deductions.
 - SDI provides **60-70% of your wages**, depending on your income.
 - Typically benefits last up to **52 weeks**.
- Paid Family Leave (PFL) provides wage replacement benefits for workers who need time off to care for a seriously ill family member or to bond with a new child.

For more information, visit [SDI Online](https://edd.ca.gov/en/disability/SDI%20Online/) ([https://edd.ca.gov/en/disability/SDI Online/](https://edd.ca.gov/en/disability/SDI%20Online/)) or <https://edd.ca.gov/en/disability/paid-family-leave/>. California requires all state disability paperwork to be completed online or over the phone (800-300-5616 | EDD’s toll-free “TTY”: 800-815-9387).

Social Security Agency & SSDI:

The SSDI program pays benefits to you and certain family members if you are “insured,” meaning you worked long enough and paid Social Security taxes. More information about the medical criteria can be found on the website but, in general, the medical condition qualifying you for disability must be expected to last at least one year or result in death. For more information or to apply, visit [SSA](https://www.ssa.gov/) (<https://www.ssa.gov/>)

Applying for SDI While Waiting for SSDI:

In California, it can take **5 to 8 months** (or longer) to get a decision about whether you qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). While you wait, you can apply for **State Disability Insurance (SDI)** to receive temporary financial support.

If you qualify for SDI, you can receive benefits while your SSDI application is being processed, and **getting SDI will not affect your SSDI eligibility**. SDI is designed to help replace part of your income if you can’t work due to a short-term disability, like symptoms of MS or other conditions.

If you think you might qualify, applying for SDI right away can help you get financial relief while waiting for SSDI.

Social Security Agency & SSI:

The SSI program provides monthly payments to adults and children with disabilities or blindness who have income and resources below specific financial limits. It also provides payments to people aged 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial qualifications. For more information or to apply, visit [SSA \(https://www.ssa.gov/\)](https://www.ssa.gov/)

To apply online, follow these steps:

1. Go to [SSA Disability Benefits \(https://www.ssa.gov/\)](https://www.ssa.gov/) and select “Apply for Disability.”
2. Fill out the Disability Benefit Application.
3. Answer the disability questions.
4. Mail or take the required documents to your Social Security office.

To apply by phone:

- Call 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment. During the call, they will determine if you need an in-person appointment or if you can apply over the phone.

Tips for calling:

- Avoid peak times (first week of the month and Wednesdays).
- Call at 7:00 a.m.
- Be prepared to be on hold for 35-45+ minutes.
- Seek answers online first if possible.

Things to Keep in Mind If You Apply for and Receive SDI While Waiting for SSI:

If you apply for State Disability Insurance (SDI) while waiting for a decision about Supplemental Security Income (SSI), it’s important to know about SSI’s resource limits:

- SSI has strict limits on how much money you can have saved:
 - \$2,000 for individuals
 - \$3,000 for couples

If you save money from your SDI benefits and it pushes you over these limits, it could affect your eligibility for SSI. It’s a good idea to plan how you use your SDI benefits while waiting for SSI approval.

What Our Clinic Can Do:

Government-Based Disability Programs:

- After submitting your application and medical release form, send a MyChart message or call (415) 353-2273 to request an appointment with Amy Schwartzburg, Nurse Practitioner. For the appointment you will need to provide the 15-digit receipt number that begins with “R” (ex. R100000012345678).
- Please remember that all dates and the duration of the disability detailed on the forms are subject to provider approval.

Private Disability Insurance:

- Contact your employer’s HR department or insurance carrier for process directions and to sign a release form.
- Complete the employee section of the forms and sign where indicated.

- Send the forms to UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center via MyChart, fax (415-353-2633), mail, or drop them off at our clinic.

Leave of Absence Requests:

- For Paid Family Leave information, visit [EDD Disability](http://edd.ca.gov/disability) (edd.ca.gov/disability).
- You may need a recent appointment with your provider for documentation. Contact your HR department for forms and fill out the employee section before returning them to our clinic.

Department of Motor Vehicles: Disabled Persons Placards, Driving Evaluations, Reporting, Re-Evaluation, and Resources:

Please note that most of this information comes from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). You are always encouraged to contact the DMV directly or more information, resources, and instructions.

Disabled Persons Placards:

Having a diagnosis of MS or a neuroinflammatory disease does not automatically qualify you for a disabled person placard. However, if you require disabled parking due to impaired mobility or other disability that qualifies under California law, you may be eligible.

According to the California DMV, you may qualify for a Disabled Person Placard or License Plate if you have impaired mobility for any of these reasons:

- You have lost the use of one or more lower extremities, or both hands.
- You have a diagnosed disease that substantially impairs or interferes with mobility.
- You are unable to move without the aid of an assistive device.
- You have specific, documented visual problems, including lower vision or partial sightedness.

Requiring the use of any assistive device such as a wheelchair, crutches, or a cane generally qualifies a person for disabled parking. If you feel your mobility is significantly impaired, please discuss this with your healthcare provider. You can work with your primary care provider or notify your neurologist at our clinic.

How to Apply for a Disabled Person Placard:

1. Visit the California DMV website for detailed instructions and the required form: [DMV Virtual Office](https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv-virtual-office/dpp-application/) (<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv-virtual-office/dpp-application/>)
2. Complete an [Application for Disabled Person Placard or Plates \(REG 195\)](#).
 - Print the form and complete sections 1-4.
3. Once completed, scan the form and send it back to us so we can complete the medical verification portion of the form.
4. After we have completed the medical verification and sent it back to you, please submit the completed form to the DMV. Contact your local DMV or visit the California DMV website for more information.

Please note: Some DMV locations accept digital copies, but most require the original copy. In addition to the form, the DMV will require **a copy of one of the following proofs** of true full name and date of birth:

- State-issued driver's license (DL) or identification (ID) card.
- Birth certificate.
- Valid and current U.S. passport or U.S. passport card.

- Additional acceptable documents as proof of true full name and date of birth may be required.

Please be prepared to pay any applicable DMV fees using your bank information or credit card. Contact your local DMV for additional information.

Driving Evaluations, Reporting, Re-Evaluation, and Resources:

Certain medical conditions can affect your ability to drive safely. However, having a medical condition does not automatically restrict your driving privileges. If you have concerns about your ability to drive safely, obtaining a driving evaluation can help identify any challenges and recommend appropriate adaptive equipment or strategies to keep you safe on the road. Driving evaluations are not typically covered by health insurance plans, but you can contact your health plan to learn more.

Reporting and Re-Evaluation:

- Under California law, physicians must file a report with the local Department of Public Health about any patient who has a medical or mental health condition possibly affecting their ability to drive safely, such as loss of consciousness events, moderate to severe dementia, and certain visual impairments.
- Your neurologist does not have the authority to grant, suspend, restrict, or hasten the DMV review process. Only the DMV has the authority to give permission to drive, determine timelines for reinstatement of driving privileges, or to manage driving licenses.

When the DMV is informed of a diagnosis, they will review the information submitted by a physician and the individual and determine whether the person is capable of driving safely. The DMV generally aims to keep you licensed as long as you can safely operate a vehicle.

Please visit the [California DMV Website](https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/) (<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/>) or call your local DMV office for more information.

For more information on maintaining your driving independence, visit the [DMV Resources](https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-education-and-safety/educational-materials/fast-facts/helping-drivers-maintain-their-driving-independence-ffdl-41/) (<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-education-and-safety/educational-materials/fast-facts/helping-drivers-maintain-their-driving-independence-ffdl-41/>)

Resources to Help You Prepare for Changes in Your Driving Skills:

- Occupational Therapists (OTs): Can evaluate your driving and recommend aids, strategies, and training. Not all OTs offer driver evaluations, but resources are available to find specialized OTs.
 - For more information, visit: [TREDS Driver Evaluation](https://treds.ucsd.edu/driver-evaluation/) (treds.ucsd.edu/driver-evaluation/)
 - OT Locator: [Elder Safety OT Locator](https://eldersafety.org/resources/occupational_therapist_locator.html) (eldersafety.org/resources/occupational_therapist_locator.html)
- Mature Driver Improvement Courses: Provide instruction on defensive driving and the effects of medications, fatigue, alcohol, and sensory limitations. For more information, call 1-800-777-0133 or visit: [Mature Driver Improvement Program](https://dmv.ca.gov/portal/mature-driver-improvement-program) (dmv.ca.gov/portal/mature-driver-improvement-program)

- AARP Driver Safety Course: Helps reduce risks of traffic violations and collisions. Check with your insurance company for possible discounts. For more information, call 1-888-227-7669 or visit: [AARP Driver Safety \(aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver_safety/\)](http://aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver_safety/)
- CarFit: A program by AARP, AOTA, and AAA to improve drivers' car fit. For more information, call 1-888-227-7669.
- AAA Information on Senior Driver Safety and Mobility: Visit [Senior Driving AAA \(seniordriving.aaa.com\)](http://seniordriving.aaa.com) or call 1-800-637-2122.

Senior Ombudsman Program:

The DMV's Senior Ombudsman Program helps seniors continue driving safely. They represent public safety interests and ensure senior drivers are treated fairly and with respect. Contact the ombudsmen for assistance:

- San Francisco, Oakland, and Bay Area: (510) 563-8998
- Sacramento/Northern California: (916) 657-6464 or (916) 657-7109
- Los Angeles and Central Coast: (833) 493-0677
- Orange/San Bernardino/San Diego: (833) 493-0676

SECTION 10: Caregivers & Resources

Support for Caregivers:

Loved ones, spouses, partners, adult children, family, friends, and others who serve in caregiving roles are essential members of a person's healthcare team and their lives. Many people find themselves both receiving caregiving and providing it to others. Both receiving and giving care can present benefits and challenges to those involved. Getting support is key to maintaining your ability to give and receive care.

If you have ever taken a flight, or even if you haven't, many of us have heard the advice that in the case of an emergency, "put your oxygen mask on first, before helping others." However, when it comes to providing and receiving care over the long term, we can't afford to wait until we feel like there is an emergency, and sometimes every day can feel like an emergency.

Whether you are providing care, receiving care, or both, it is important to recognize that support for caregivers is critical to maintaining the ability to provide care for someone else. For these reasons, we strongly encourage caregivers to seek support. Here are just a few of the available organizations and resources for caregivers:

- ARCH National Respite Network: Provides a search function to help caregivers and professionals locate respite services in their community and advocates for respite in policy and programs at the national, state, and local levels. [ARCH National Respite Network & Resource Center](#)
- Caregiver Action Network (CAN): Offers education, peer support, and resources to family caregivers across the country free of charge. [Caregiver Action Network](#)
- [Caregiver.com](#): Maintains one of the most visited caregiver sites on the internet, publishes Today's Caregiver magazine, and provides tips, links, articles, and more. [Caregiver.com](#)
- CaringBridge: Provides free websites that connect people experiencing a significant health challenge to family and friends. [CaringBridge](#)
- Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA): Offers a wide array of services and publications based on caregiver needs at the local, state, and national levels. Find state-by-state help for family caregivers. [Family Caregiver Alliance](#)
- Well Spouse Association: Provides peer support and education about the special challenges and unique issues facing spouse caregivers every day. [Well Spouse Association](#)

Hired Caregivers, Home Health, Insurance Coverage, and More:

In addition to family and friends, sometimes the option or need to hire a caregiver may arise. It is important to note that when we talk about hiring caregivers, we are not referring to skilled nursing or professional licensed healthcare services provided by Home Health Agencies. Generally, attendant care or caregiving services range from housecleaning, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, personal care services (such as bowel and bladder care, bathing, grooming), accompaniment to medical appointments, and protective supervision.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of health insurance plans, including Medicare, do not cover the costs of a caregiver. Medi-Cal does have a program called In-Home Support Services (IHSS), and more information about this is included in this section.

Depending on your situation, you may have resources available through your employer, your county, Long-Term Health Insurance (if purchased), or other sources. There are several state, county, and other organizations available to help you learn about caregiving options and the process of hiring caregivers.

In Home Supportive Services:

For patients with Medi-Cal or a managed Medi-Cal plan who meet criteria for the program, the In-Home Support Services (IHSS) Program will help pay for services provided to you so that you can remain safely in your own home. The general criteria for a person to qualify for IHSS include being 65 years of age and over, being disabled, or being blind.

- To learn more about IHSS, visit [California Department of Social Services - IHSS](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/in-home-supportive-services) (<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/in-home-supportive-services>).
- To find out more, contact your local county social services office or use this link: [County IHSS Offices](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/county-ihss-offices) (<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/county-ihss-offices>).

We hope these resources help you find the support you need as a caregiver. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

SECTION 10: Advanced Healthcare Planning

Living Now, Planning for the Future (The UCSF Cancer Center Guide, Material from the UCSF MERI Center):

Advance care planning is for everyone. People of all ages and health conditions may unexpectedly find themselves in situations where they are unable to speak for themselves, such as during an accident or severe illness. In these situations, having an advanced health care directive ensures that your doctor knows your wishes regarding the kind of care you want and who you want to make decisions on your behalf.

Advanced Healthcare Directives:

There are many factors to consider when developing plans for the future. In this section, we will focus on Advanced Healthcare Directives (AHCD). In our MyChart section, you can learn more about designating a “proxy,” a trusted person or family member to whom you grant access to your MyChart account. People elect to have a proxy for various reasons. Granting someone proxy access to your MyChart allows them to view your health information and communicate with your doctors.

If you have additional questions about other aspects of advance care planning, please see the resources included in this section or reach out to your provider or the clinical patient navigator.

What is an Advanced Healthcare Directive (AHCD)?

An AHCD is a way to make your wishes known if you are unable to speak for yourself or prefer someone else to speak for you. An AHCD can serve one or both of these functions:

- Power of Attorney for Healthcare: To appoint an agent.
- Instructions for Healthcare: To indicate your wishes.

Is the AHCD Different from a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare?

The AHCD was enacted by July 2000 legislation and replaces previous legislation and acts (the Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare and the Natural Death Act Declaration).

However, if you completed one of these previous forms that was valid before July 1, 2000, those forms are still valid now.

What Do I Need to Do?

Completing an Advance Healthcare Directive is meant to be something that person can do without an expert; and an attorney is not necessary. You can learn more about advance care planning resources and workshops in MyChart by clicking the “Advance Care Planning” option in the main menu. You can also learn more by visiting the [UCSF MERI Center](https://meri.ucsf.edu/) (<https://meri.ucsf.edu/>).

You can get a form on MyChart by clicking the “Advance Care Planning” option in the main menu. Once on that page, you will see an option to get a new advanced directive, or you can now upload an advanced directive that you have already completed. You can also bring your notarized copy to the clinic and ask that the staff upload it to your medical chart.

Once it is uploaded to your UCSF medical record, other providers at UCSF will be able to find it in your chart.

Additional Resources:

There are many resources available about advanced healthcare planning and advanced healthcare directives. You can get advanced healthcare directives and more information by visiting the following websites:

- [Prepare for Your Care](https://prepareforyourcare.org/en/advance-directive-state/ca) (<https://prepareforyourcare.org/en/advance-directive-state/ca>)
- UCSF MERI Center - Advance Care Planning (<https://meri.ucsf.edu/advance-care-planning>)
- Coda Alliance (<https://codaalliance.org/>)
- Heart2Heart (<https://caccc-usa.org/en/activities/heart2heart.html>)

Attend a Workshop:

What Matters Most? A free 2-part Advance Care Planning workshop hosted by the UCSF MERI Center. This two-part workshop will help you learn about the Advance Directive Form, questions to ask yourself and your family, considerations about your wishes, and how to complete the form.

Remember, talking to your loved ones about your wishes is essential. For more information, visit [UCSF MERI Center](#).

SECTION 11: The UCSF Multiple Sclerosis Brain Bank & Donating

The UCSF Multiple Sclerosis and Neuroinflammation Brain Bank (MSBB):

The UCSF Multiple Sclerosis Brain Bank (MSBB) serves as a repository for tissue donated for research purposes. It is committed to advancing the understanding of MS by acting as a source of tissue for use by qualified investigators to conduct research on the causes and features of multiple sclerosis.

Importance of Tissue Donation:

Many of the most important advances in our understanding and treatment of MS over the last few decades have depended on the study of well-characterized, carefully curated human brain tissue provided by brain banks. The meticulous study of donated tissues from people who lived with MS has been one of the most crucial sources of insights into disease mechanisms.

Contributions to Research:

Studying MS and neuroinflammatory brain tissue has been key to our understanding of:

- The inflammatory etiology of the disease
- Mechanisms regulating myelin regeneration
- Neuronal loss in progressive MS
- Insights into several experimental treatments being used or developed for MS

Value of Tissue Donation:

Donating tissue (including brain, spinal cord, spleen, lymph nodes, and retinae) is one of the most valuable contributions to research that a person diagnosed with MS or other inflammatory and neurodegenerative neurological conditions, and their family, can make. Donated tissue will continue to be critical to our future discoveries and understanding of neuroinflammatory disease. The study of human tissue continues to move us closer to therapies that limit the lasting effects of relapses, promote myelin repair, and protect neurons.

Contact Information:

For more information about the MSBB, the autopsy program, and the research it conducts, please contact the MSBB at: MSBrainBank@ucsf.edu.

We hope this information helps you understand the vital role of tissue donation in advancing MS research. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to the MSBB.

SECTION 12: The UCSF Division of Neuroimmunology and Glial Biology Patient & Family Advisory Council

We are proud to have a dedicated Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) for our division.

Purpose of the PFAC:

PFAC members partner with the clinic to address issues and design interventions that improve our overall service and care for patients and their families. Dedicated to helping our clinic be truly patient-centered, the PFAC works to:

- Enhance the patient and family experience
- Facilitate ease of navigation
- Contribute to patient and provider education
- Shape the future of our clinic

Membership:

Members of the PFAC must be current patients or involved family members of current patients.

Learn More:

To learn more about our PFAC, please speak with your provider or call the Clinical Patient Navigator at (415) 514-6442.

Your Feedback & Our Thanks:

This Vital Information Packet is a living document. We are always in the process of updating, adding, and improving this packet. As your Patient and Family Advisory Council, we continually seek input from individuals and families seeking care at the UCSF MS & Neuroinflammation Center. If you have any comments, suggestions, or other feedback, please contact the Clinical Patient Navigator at (415) 514-6442.

Thank you for helping us improve our services and care.

