



Tightness in your limbs?

Difficulty relaxing your muscles?

You may have spasticity,  
get the answers you are looking for.

Spasticity  
**A:nswers**



## The Basics

### What exactly is spasticity?

Spasticity occurs when certain muscles in your body involuntarily contract or tense up.<sup>1</sup> Signs of spasticity are experienced as a range of symptoms, including forced twitching, muscle stiffness, or uncontrollable spasms in different limbs and muscles.<sup>2</sup> This increase in muscle tension can be incredibly painful and even debilitating.<sup>1</sup>

Spasticity can be hard to understand and even more difficult to live with. It can make even the simplest tasks difficult—or impossible—from buttoning a shirt to bathing or eating.<sup>3</sup> You deserve all of the answers and information available, so that together, you and your doctor can find the treatment that fits your needs.

**Learn more at [SpasticityAnswers.com](https://spasticityanswers.com)**



## The Diagnosis

### How can I tell if I have spasticity? What are the signs?

Spasticity can lead to a range of sensations, from mild muscle stiffness to severe, painful, and uncontrollable limb contortion.<sup>4</sup> Because of the varying types and symptoms, it can be difficult to tell whether or not you have spasticity.

### Symptoms of spasticity may include:

- Increased muscle tone that may be experienced as discomfort, tightness, stiffness, or pain
- Rapid muscle contractions
- Muscle spasms
- Difficulty moving certain joints
- Heightened muscle contraction in response to muscle stretching<sup>4</sup>

### Spasticity may be caused by:

- Stroke
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Cerebral palsy in adults
- Traumatic brain injury
- Spinal cord injury<sup>2,4</sup>

**It's important to talk to your specialist about all of the symptoms you're experiencing.**



# The Conversation

## How can I prepare for a conversation about spasticity with my doctor?

Simply answer the questions below and review them with your specialist.  
These questions may help get the conversation started.

### Questions to consider when discussing your symptoms with your specialist:

What are my specific symptoms? \_\_\_\_\_

What symptoms bother me the most? \_\_\_\_\_

### Do you have or have you ever had any of the following conditions or neurological events that affect your brain or spinal cord?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stroke                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Traumatic brain injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple sclerosis (MS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spinal cord injury     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult cerebral palsy    |   |

### Factors to think about before you begin to explore treatment for spasticity:

How are my symptoms affecting my daily life? \_\_\_\_\_

How consistent are my spasticity symptoms? \_\_\_\_\_

How much care and support are available to me? \_\_\_\_\_

### What are some goals and activities you hope to accomplish once you meet with your treatment team and start your treatment?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carry my purse or bag | <input type="checkbox"/> Be less dependent on others for help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Straighten my arm     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Washing or dressing   |   |

**Review the above questions with your doctor and talk about your treatment options on the next page.**



# The Options

# A Way to Learn More

## What type of treatment is right for my spasticity?

Whether your spasticity has just appeared or you've been dealing with the symptoms for some time, there are treatment options that can help.

### The main types of treatment for spasticity are:

- Physical and occupational therapy
- Injection therapy
- Oral medications
- Orthotics
- Surgery
- Intrathecal therapy (a surgical procedure when medicine is injected directly into the area around the spinal cord)<sup>5</sup>

### Specialists often work together as a part of a spasticity rehabilitation team.

Your team may consist of:

- Physiatrists (PM&R) – Doctors who specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation
- Neurologists - Doctors who specialize in diagnosing and treating the brain and nervous system
- Physical or Occupational Therapists – Professionals who guide you through rehabilitation exercises and help adapt your environment to meet your needs
- Caregivers and family members

**Talk to your doctor about your treatment options  
or visit [SpasticityAnswers.com](https://www.spasticityanswers.com)**

**References:** **1.** Spasticity. National Multiple Sclerosis Society Web site. <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/about-multiple-sclerosis/what-we-know-about-ms/symptoms/spasticity/index.aspx>. Accessed July 2, 2013. **2.** Spasticity. National Institutes of Health Web site. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/003297.htm>. Accessed July 2, 2013. **3.** Spasticity. National Stroke Association Web site. <http://www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagename=spasticity>. Accessed July 2, 2013. **4.** What is Spasticity? National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Web site. [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/spasticity/spasticity.htm#What\\_is](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/spasticity/spasticity.htm#What_is). Accessed July 2, 2013. **5.** Spasticity. American Association of Neurological Surgeons Web site. <http://www.aans.org/en/Patient%20Information/Conditions%20and%20Treatments/Spasticity.aspx>. Accessed July 2, 2013.

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