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Frightened To Ask

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“We get wise by asking questions, and even if these are not answered, we get wise, for a well-packed question carries its answer on its back as a snail carries its shell.” ~ James Stephens

When I visit my neurologist, I always have a list of topics I want to discuss. A few times it’s been about a new MS drug on the market. And other times it’s something simple like an exercise I saw in a magazine. We’ve talked about various subjects but they all pertain to me getting better or at the least maintaining my current baseline.

The visit usually follows the same routine. He asks me what is new. I tell him. We discuss it. He answers all of my questions and makes suggestions.

Next, he puts me through a series of test that measure different abilities. Then he compares the new results to my previous results. Sometimes it involves x-rays and counting lesions but that’s usually only twice a year.

Lastly, he writes me prescriptions if needed.

Out of all of that, the only thing that makes me nervous is the contrasting of my recent test to past test. Those assessments put me on edge because they reveal if I’m improving or regressing.

It’s crazy how much more I am involved in my health decisions now than I was in the past. My previous neurologist gave me little information. And I asked very few questions of him. I just figured since he didn’t say anything that implied everything was ok. Also, a part of me was scared to ask questions. I always wondered if the MS was advancing but I was so frightened to ask. So my doctor’s appointments became monotonous. The visits were more like a casual chat with an old friend than an official meeting with someone who was supposed to be helping me improve my health.

Luckily, my current neurologist is the total opposite of my former doctor. My present neurologist always tells me the truth. If he thinks I am getting worse, he lets me know. But it’s never in a harsh way. After he tells me, we always talk about it. Yes, sometimes I cry. And we work through that too. But the best thing is, with his lead, together we try to come up with solutions to stop any negative results from advancing.

I’m not going to lie; it hurts to hear when the disease is progressing in me. But I think knowing is better than not knowing. And it also allows me to be more proactive in managing symptoms and deficiencies. One of the main things I have learned over these years about living with MS is, never be too frightened to ask questions.