

Because we are unable to safely meet in person, I've set up an online virtual meeting for the group. We will be using WebEx. Be on the look-out for a meeting invitation from WebEx; you will **need** the invitation every month in order to join the meeting, so please **DON'T DELETE THE EMAIL WHEN YOU RECEIVE IT!**

I'm having an ongoing health issue that has left me voiceless, I hope temporarily. So **I will only schedule an online meeting in April if you all would like a chance to meet virtually and talk/share without my voice chiming in.** I actually think this **might be good for all of us as a way to help us make a safe social connection** and help calm each other, even without talking about the theme of the meeting.

Please email me (workingwithms.dc.md.va@gmail.com) your yes/no choice for an online April meeting.

Meanwhile, I think the topic of our meeting is so important that I wanted to send you the agenda with helpful links so you can begin to make use of the information immediately. Please *take the time to at least view the first listed video* from MSCanDo. MSCanDo is a trusted source that partners with the NMSS to provide educational programs; I feel very comfortable encouraging you to trust the information in the video.

A very important point made by Kathy Costello, MS, ANP-BC, MSCN, Associate Vice President Healthcare Access – Leading, NMSS is that to the best understanding of MS experts at this point, **“MS alone does not increase the risk of getting COVID-19.”** Likewise, there is *no evidence at this time* that any of the Disease Modifying Therapies (DMTs) increases the risk of either contracting COVID-19 or having worse symptoms if you do contract COVID-19. In other words, NMSS does not consider MS patients as qualifying as “people who are immunocompromised” ([CDC risk factors for COVID-19; https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html)). However, if you have any other of the listed risk factors, you should take extra precautions as advised by the CDC. And *everyone*, healthy or not, should be taking all the usual precautions.

Please keep in mind that CDC.gov recommendations are being refined often as the pandemic worsens in some US areas and as we learn more from countries who were hit earlier than the spread in the US. **Check guidance daily!** **And make sure your browser is refreshed so that you're see the most current information.** The CDC always lists at the bottom of their web pages, the date the guidance was last reviewed, e.g., “Page last reviewed: March 26, 2020.” **Pay attention to the dates created of any material you are listening to or reading;** information & guidance is changing rapidly.

Stay safe and well. Stress weakens your immune system, so try to stay calm, eat healthy food, get a good night's sleep, and stay connected to trusted sources of information (just once a day or you'll increase your stress!). Meditate and try to find relaxing things to do.

-Kathy

Working with MS Support Group

WorkingWithMS.DC.MD.VA@gmail.com

(301) 337-8106

<https://sites.google.com/site/workingwithms/>

April 05, 2020

Agenda

**No Meetings in Person
until further notice!**

3:00pm	Welcome!
	Brief Introductions/Member Check-in/Your Gratitudes this Month
3:15pm	How Can I Cope with Corona Virus (COVID-19) Out There? “MS alone does <i>not</i> increase the risk of getting COVID-19.” Kathy Costello, MS, ANP-BC, MSCN, Associate Vice President Healthcare Access – Leading, NMSS
4:00pm	Member Sharings & Support
5:00pm	Adjourn

Handouts & “News You Can Use”:

Corona Virus (COVID-19) & MS (Mar 25, 2020 video, MSCanDo.org)

<https://youtu.be/HCmcgMrQKuW>

CDC: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

COVID-19 Screening Tool (An online screening tool developed by a collaboration between CDC.gov & Apple.com)

<https://www.apple.com/covid19>

CDC: Corona Virus – Household Checklist

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/checklist-household-ready.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Findex.html

NIH Corona Virus (COVID-19) Research Updates

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>

The Most Effective Ways to Kill Coronavirus in Your Home (3/28/2020; WebMD Article)

<https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200318/the-most-effective-ways-to-kill-coronavirus-in-your-home?print=true>

Coronavirus - Is It Safe to Get Deliveries (3/25/2020)

<https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200325/coronavirus-is-it-safe-to-get-deliveries?print=true>

What People With MS Should Know About COVID-19 (3/28/2020)

https://www.webmd.com/lung/covid-19-multiple-sclerosis-ms?ecd=wnl_mls_032720&ctr=wnl-mls-032720_nsl-LeadModule_cta&mb=iSgv5MM0Zk1

National MS Society’s “Ask An MS Expert – COVID-19” Webinar Series – RealTalk MS

<https://realtalkms.com/national-ms-societys-ask-an-ms-expert-webinar-series/>

Next/Upcoming Meetings:

May 17th –Meeting (**RESCHEDULED to avoid the Mother’s Day parking shortage at the Rockville Nursing Home**)

June 14th –Meeting

July 12th –Meeting

August –NO Meeting; summer heat break!

September 13th –Meeting