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Multiple System Atrophy

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Multiple System Atrophy Information Page.](#)

Multiple system atrophy (MSA) is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder characterized by symptoms of autonomic nervous system failure such as fainting spells and bladder control problems, combined with motor control symptoms such as tremor, rigidity, and loss of muscle coordination. MSA affects both men and women primarily in their 50s. Although what causes MSA is unknown, the disorder's symptoms reflect the loss of nerve cells in several different areas in the brain and spinal cord that control the autonomic nervous system and coordinate muscle movements. The loss of nerve cells may be due to the buildup of a protein called alpha-synuclein in the cells that support nerve cells in the brain.