



DIVISION OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND NEUROIMMUNOLOGY NEWSLETTER

New Season, New Updates

Dear All,

Greetings for the upcoming spring from the Division of Multiple Sclerosis & Neuroimmunology! Now that the cold weather of these past weeks is hopefully well behind us, there is a lot to look forward to this spring.

Not the least of which is the plethora of new ideas, activating studies, and fresh perspectives on MS and neuroimmunology research and care here for 2026 (and well beyond). At Northwestern, we are taking some of the lessons learned from other studies in MS and practices, and applying them to treatment approaches and trials for patients in our care.

We highlight a new partnership on cell-free DNA with the Liu Laboratory (looking for both MS patients and healthy control volunteers), the TIMELY-PLEX study (for people with acute optic neuritis or myelitis), the AMS05 study (for Ocrelizumab vs. discontinuation for early MS), the Ocrelizumab and GLP-1 co-treatment study, and the Briumvi for early MS study.

We also hope to introduce to you some upcoming events, such as the MS walk for the National MS Society, and my personal favorite, our first cookie fundraiser.

This year, the American Academy of Neurology Annual Meeting will occur in Chicago too. Chicago will host approximately 10,000 neurologists worldwide this April!

Integral to this work are people who are “behind the scenes” working on MS medication delivery and lab-based research who you wouldn’t otherwise meet in the clinic. We introduce you to them here.

We hope this new season will blossom with you.

Sincerely,
Farrah



Meet everyone on our division team!

Photographer: Jose Torres
 Gr8y Productions LLC; Owner-Photographer
 (708)674-9630; www.gr8yproductions.com

Join our new studies!

Plasma Collection for Cell-Free DNA Methylation Profiling in Multiple Sclerosis and Controls

This study hopes to better understand MS by looking at cell-free DNA—tiny genetic fragments in blood that give clues about what’s happening in the body. We are looking for samples from patients with MS and volunteers that do not have MS. This is a one-time study visit that entails a single blood draw.



Contact:

Caroline Gebczak

caroline.gebczak@northwestern.edu

630-313-0470

Dylan Rice

dylan.rice@northwestern.edu

240-362-4800



Randomized, Blinded Discontinuation Trial of Ocrelizumab in Early Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis (AMS05)

Join a 4-year study exploring how stopping ocrelizumab may affect long-term remission in early multiple sclerosis! We are currently recruiting participants who have recently been diagnosed with relapsing multiple sclerosis to see if people can stay in remission after stopping ocrelizumab.



Contact:

Caroline Gebczak

caroline.gebczak@northwestern.edu

630-313-0470

Dylan Rice

dylan.rice@northwestern.edu

240-362-4800

More of our studies!

Ublituximab (Briumvi) for Early forms of Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis

The goal of this study is to understand the safety and tolerability of Ublituximab (Briumvi) in people with early relapsing MS. We also want to measure changes in a blood biomarker (neurofilament light chain) before and after treatment.

Contact:

Caroline Gebczak

caroline.gebczak@northwestern.edu | 630-313-0470

Dylan Rice

dylan.rice@northwestern.edu | 240-362-4800



People with Multiple Sclerosis treated with Ocrelizumab and Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 agonist

We are enrolling individuals with MS who are being treated with Ocrevus and are either currently taking or planning to start a GLP-1 medication. The study aims to better understand how GLP-1 medications may affect MS symptoms, energy, walking ability, and overall quality of life.

Contact:

Caroline Gebczak

caroline.gebczak@northwestern.edu | 630-313-0470

Dylan Rice

dylan.rice@northwestern.edu | 240-362-4800



Treatment of Inflammatory Myelitis and Optic Neuritis with Early vs Rescue Plasma Exchange (TIMELY-PLEX)

This study explores whether starting plasma exchange earlier leads to better recovery for people with severe optic neuritis or transverse myelitis. Participants will receive plasma exchange either early in treatment or later if initial therapy does not lead to improvement.

Contact:

Caroline Gebczak

caroline.gebczak@northwestern.edu | 630-313-0470

Dylan Rice

dylan.rice@northwestern.edu | 240-362-4800



Investigating the Impact of Sex Hormones on Corticospinal Excitability, Motor Learning, and Fatigue in Females with Multiple Sclerosis

This study explores how strength and motor function fluctuate across the menstrual cycle in people with MS. We also have an ongoing study on hormone therapies and menopause in MS.

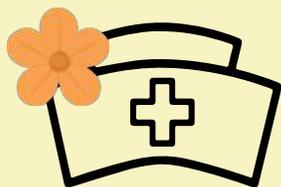
Contact:

Edith L. Graham, MD

edith.graham@northwestern.edu

312-695-7950

Team Member Highlight



Infusion Coordinator
Department of Neurology
Neuroimmunology Infusion
Center

Paula Gozdzia, BSN, RN

"It is important to me to know that our patients receive the best care we can provide" —Paula

What inspired you to pursue your work?

"My love of biology and a deep personal connection to caring for others led me to work in healthcare. I enjoy working directly with patients and nursing was the perfect fit for me."

What's something about your work that you find fulfilling?

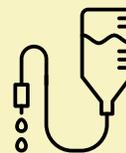
"I love being part of a team of expert providers, nurses and staff that work together advancing medicine and that truly care about the patient. It is important to me to know that our patients receive the best care we can provide. I strive to help our patients navigate through the complicated world of healthcare and make the process as stress free as possible by explaining what to expect when starting their treatments. I love to be a patient's advocate!"

What are you currently focusing on in clinic?

"I work with NM's infusion center where the role of infusion therapies is growing in medicine. We are continually introducing new medications and expanding our resources to deliver new treatments."

What's one thing you wish more patients knew about MS or the care for MS?

"I wish patients appreciated how much a holistic treatment plan, integrating both MS therapies and lifestyle changes can support their long-term health."



Grand Rounds Presentations



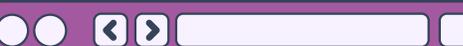
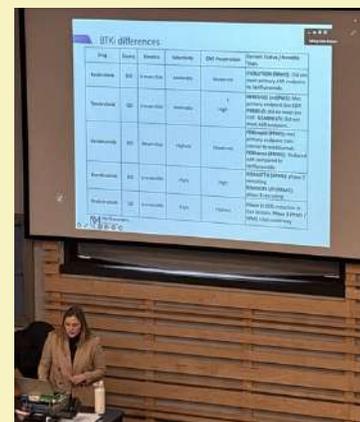
Presented on February 16th, 2026.



Also, **Dr. Edie Graham** presented at the grand rounds on MS therapeutics at the University of Illinois, Chicago!

Presented on February 12th, 2026.

We're proud to share that **Dr. Shailee Shah** and **Dr. Ditte Primdahl** recently presented at the Lurie Cancer Center & Hematology/Oncology Grand Rounds. Their presentation "Autoimmune and Paraneoplastic Neurological Syndromes" explored the complex intersection of oncology and neuroimmunology.



PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

<https://www.neurology.northwestern.edu/divisions/ms-neuroimmunology/index.html>





Update on . . . Ocrevus Zunovo

By Farrah Mateen, MD, PhD

Q1: What is Ocrevus Zunovo?

Ocrevus Zunovo (OZ) is a new subcutaneous formulation of Ocrevus (which has traditionally been given IV since coming to the U.S. market in 2017). OZ has been out for about 18 months and represents a new way to receive Ocrevus. Ocrevus itself is a B-cell depleting drug that works very well to prevent new disease attacks and activity in MS.

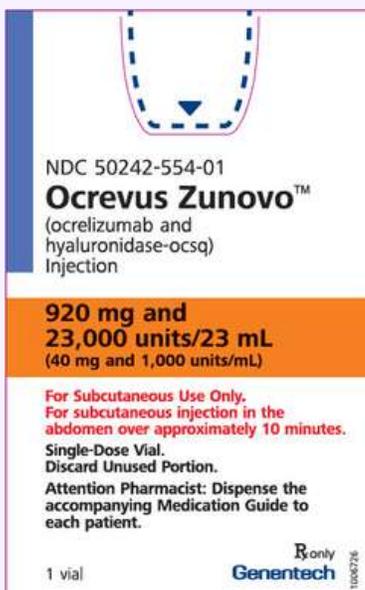
Q2: What types of MS are eligible to receive Ocrevus Zunovo?

Relapsing forms of MS (clinically isolated syndrome, relapsing remitting MS, relapsing secondary progressive MS) AND primary progressive MS.

Q3: What is the difference between Ocrevus IV and Ocrevus Zunovo SubQ?

Ocrevus IV is given in the arm vein. Ocrevus Zunovo is given as an injection in the subcutaneous fat in the abdomen.

Ocrevus IV starts as two loading doses (of about 2 hours or so each) over 2 weeks. Ocrevus Zunovo SubQ is given as a one-time dose (for about 15 minutes).



Q4: How often do you take Ocrevus Zunovo?

Every 6 months.

Q5: Is Ocrevus Zunovo as good as Ocrevus IV?

There was a trial comparing IV and SubQ Ocrevus among 233 patients in 37 centers in 8 countries. Patients were followed for just over one year. The two versions were highly similar in the way they work and 97% of patients had no new MS disease activity.

In OZ, there were more skin reactions within the 1 hour of the injection. By comparison, with Ocrevus IV, there were more infusion related reactions.

Q6: Have there been any concerns with switching?

So far, my patients who have wanted to switch have done so without problems. It does require insurance/payor approval first though, so talk to your doctor for more information.

Reference:

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12006663/>



March is **MS Awareness Month!** A time to raise awareness, amplify the voices of those living with MS, and strengthen our commitment to advancing research, care, and community support.

This month, we honor the strength and resilience of individuals and families impacted by MS while continuing to drive research forward and expand access to high-quality care.

Spring Forward & Step Up for the MS Walk!



April 26th, Chicago

If you're interested in walking with Team Northwestern at the MS Walk in Chicago, we would love to have you join us!

You can sign up using the QR code. Feel free to share the link with friends, family, or anyone who may be interested in supporting the MS community.



<https://tinyurl.com/33z8karh>

Our team's fundraising goal is \$5,000. Every step helps advance research and support for people living with MS.

Community Feature: Vase Auction

Art in Action: Support MS research by purchasing this one-of-a-kind, hand-crafted ceramic vase made by our own Dr. Shailee Shah!



Vase is approx. 10 inches tall and 6 inches wide

Starting Bid: \$125

Bidding Closes: May 1st, 2026

Scan the QR code below to submit your bid. All proceeds will directly support ongoing MS research initiatives.



<https://tinyurl.com/2ztb6k7p>



Dr. Shailee Shah shaping the vase at the wheel.

Sweet Support: Cookie Fundraiser

We're also hosting a **cookie fundraiser** for the division! If you donate over \$50, you'll receive a set of 5 special, hand-decorated cookies made with love. Donations over \$100 receive a gift of 12 hand-decorated sugar cookies!



Each cookie is crafted by The Sweets Gallery. Find them on Instagram @thesweetsgallery or visit: <https://www.thesweetsgallery.com/>



To Donate:

1. Scan the QR code and enter your desired donation amount.

<https://feinberg.nu/MSResearch>

2. Email caroline.gebczak@northwestern.edu with the note "COOKIE" and the donation amount!

Enjoy a small thank you from us for making a big difference.



Support Our Work!

Your generosity helps us accelerate discoveries, expand clinical trials, and improve MS care. You can support MS research at our center by scanning the QR code or visiting the link below.



<https://feinberg.nu/MSResearch>

Stay Connected!

Do you want to receive future newsletters? Scan the QR code below to be added to our subscriber list!

Newsletters are sent out quarterly.



<https://tinyurl.com/ms2d8a6x>