



Possible Conversation Starters: BOWEL, BLADDER, and SLEEP

BOWEL CONVERSATIONS

Conversations With Your Healthcare Team...

- “I’m very constipated and it’s making some of my other MS symptoms feel worse. What’s going on?”
- “I’ve added a lot of fiber to my diet but the constipation isn’t getting any better. What can I do?”
- “I’m constipated but I have diarrhea too – why?”
- “I’ve had two bowel accidents and I’m freaked out!”
- “Can you explain how a bowel program might help?”

Conversations With A Support Partner...

- “I need to add a lot more fiber and fluids to my diet – please support me on this.”
- “I’ve had a few accidents and am feeling seared and embarrassed. Please be patient with me, especially if I seem irritated or frustrated.”
- “My doctor recommended a bowel program. This might change our schedule a bit, but could also help me be more independent and predictable.”

BLADDER CONVERSATIONS

Conversations With Your Healthcare Team...

- “I’m having bladder accidents – is that my MS?”
- “When I have to pee, I REALLY have to pee, but then when I get to the toilet nothing happens.”
- “After I urinate, I don’t feel my bladder is empty.”
- “I’m have to pee 4-5 times a night – I’m exhausted!”
- “I’ve heard that some people need to catheterize if they can’t empty their bladders. That scares me!”
- “I’ve had 3 bladder infections this year and I never had them before – what’s going on?”
- “I’m scared to drink because I’ll have to pee more!”

Conversations With A Support Partner...

- “I have to pee often and I feel a lot of urgency so I’m anxious about going out. We need to make sure we know where the bathrooms are!”
- “The doctor said I’m not emptying my bladder when I pee. I need to start catheterizing myself so I’ll feel more secure about going out and doing things.”
- “I’m trying to research different catheters, but the information is overwhelming. Can we look at it together this weekend?”

SLEEP CONVERSATIONS

Conversations With Your Healthcare Team...

- “I have trouble falling asleep and then when I do, I wake up every couple of hours.”
- “I’m so exhausted during the day that I take naps. But then I have trouble falling asleep at night.”
- “If I’m so tired all the time, why can’t I sleep?”
- “My partner says I keep kicking him during the night – what’s going on?”
- “Can you explain what a sleep study is and why it can be helpful?”

Conversations With A Support Partner...

- “My provider says I need a consistent bedtime routine. Can we agree on a reasonable bedtime with no screen time in bed? I really need your support on this.”
- “The sleep specialist says our bed is just for sleep and sex – so if I have trouble sleeping, I’m going to go into another room and read until I feel sleepy – please understand!”

Conversations With A Friend...

- “I’m trying to avoid long naps in the afternoon. Could you come over sometime this week for a game or walk?”