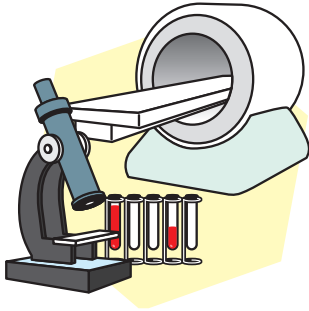


## Diagnosing your TM:

Diagnosing TM can be a tricky thing for doctors to do. Everybody's symptoms can be different and some symptoms are also warning signs of other diseases of the brain and spinal cord. Here are some of the tests that doctors use to diagnose TM:

**MRI** stands for *Magnetic Resonance Imaging*. It is a machine that you lie in, and a giant magnet spins around you that is able to take pictures of your brain and spine.

**Blood Tests** are used to look for signs of infection, swelling or inflammation and other diseases that may be causing damage to your spinal nerves.



**LP** stands for *Lumbar Puncture*. The lumbar part of your spine is at the bottom of your spine, near your waist. Removing some of the cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds your spinal cord from this part of your spine is generally safe to do. It allows doctors to look for signs of inflammation, infection or injury in the fluid surrounding your brain and spinal cord.

## Treatment

There is no cure for TM yet. Work is being done by doctors and scientists to help people recover from TM and to make the symptoms less severe. There are many ways to treat TM so that you can be comfortable and active. For many people, TM symptoms improve over time. On the next pages we will tell you about some things that you can do.

## Information and resources

Learn more about Transverse Myelitis by visiting these websites:

### Neuroscience for kids

<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/neurok.html>

### Canadian Transverse Myelitis Association

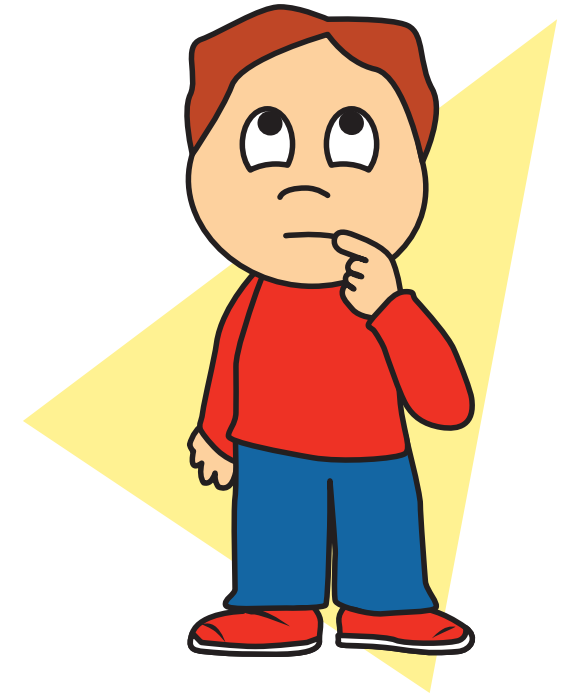
<http://mytm.ca/>

## Books for kids

### 5K, Ballet and a Spinal Cord Injury

by Jennifer Starzec and Sara Todd Hammer.  
(available in paperback and ebook)

# What is Transverse Myelitis?



This brochure was developed by  
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## What you need to know:

Anyone can get Transverse Myelitis (TM), but it is a rare disease. Only about 3 in every 1 million people have TM.

If you have Transverse Myelitis, some of the nerve cells in your spinal cord have been damaged. Your spinal cord runs down the middle of your back. It is connected to your brain at the top and runs all the way down to your waist. It is protected by back bones called vertebrae and a fluid called cerebrospinal fluid. It is the main “highway” that brings information to and from your brain. Nerve cells in your spinal cord connect to all parts of your body.

When spinal nerves are damaged, you can lose movement, feeling and control over the parts of your body connected to those nerves.

## The cause of TM:

TM can be caused by a virus or by the cells in your body which attack viruses. Sometimes your own body can mistake nerve cells for germs and if that happens, it attacks them. This is called an autoimmune reaction.

At the moment it is thought that TM is usually caused by an autoimmune reaction. Doctors will try to find out what caused your TM but sometimes an answer isn't found, or we don't know enough to understand it yet.



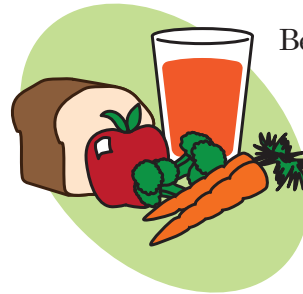
## Overall Health

Get enough sleep to feel good and to help maintain your body's natural resistance to infection.



## Eat Well & Be Active

Eating healthy foods will help strengthen your body.



Be as active as possible every day. Being active can very often reduce symptoms.

Colds, Flu and other viruses can often make your TM symptoms worse for a while. Treating and preventing these illnesses

will often help you to manage your TM symptoms as well.

## Physical Therapy

Exercise can help retrain muscles and loosen muscles when they become tight.

Braces and other devices can help you do more on your own.

A physiotherapist will teach you how to use these devices and how to move your body in new ways.



## Support from Family and Friends

It is normal to feel sad, alone, scared, frustrated and angry.

TM is a difficult disease to cope with. Talking with friends, family and your doctor about these feelings is important. It will help them to understand your TM and it allows them to help you in appropriate ways.



## Going to the Doctor

TM is a life long disease. It is important to visit your doctors often as your abilities and needs change over time.



Talk to your doctors about what works for you and what doesn't. Most doctors are learning about TM just like you are because it is a rare disease.