

The logo consists of the lowercase letters 'ms' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

Multiple Sclerosis
Hawke's Bay

Spring 2026 Newsletter

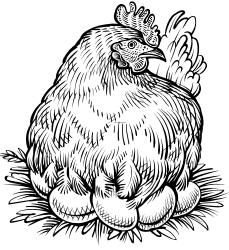
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Lookout for our new
roadside flag to show
when the office is open!



From our Office Manager: Jenny Brabin



Spring is in evidence all around us in the Bay - with the welcome appearance of scented bulb flowers, the lambs and greening of our local parks and trees! My six hens have stepped up egg production too as daylight hours have increased.



What does Spring mean for you? Enjoying a little more time in the outdoors - do you have a sheltered section of garden you would like to tidy up? If you are planting small veggie plants, remember having some fresh veges to share with friends and neighbours is a lovely way to connect and help make someone else's day! Just taking a thermos and sitting wrapped up by the seaside is always therapeutic.

MS Awareness Week in HB

We had another successful bucket collection on Friday 18th September, and would like to thank the following businesses for allowing us to collect at their premises:

- Pak'n'Save Napier
- Pak'n'Save Tamatea
- 4-Square Ahuriri
- New World Greenmeadows
- New World Hastings
- New World Waipukurau



Also a big thank you to the following organisations for collecting on our behalf:

- Greenmeadows Rotary
- Spirit of Napier Lions
- Lions Stortford Hastings
- Lions & Leos of Waipukurau



And special thanks to you individuals who so generously gave of your time to help MSHB be seen in our communities and collected over \$3,400 in donations!

Upcoming Events to look forward to:

- I am working through everything required to make this year's **Multiple Steps for MS** a success: This year we are holding it on **Saturday 10th October**, Registrations starting at **12.30pm**. Please ask your family and friends if they would support this key fundraiser by participating in one of the walks or fun runs!
- **Napier Repertory Players Charity Night for HBMS: *Taking Off*** by Roger Hall & directed by Sharyn Hildreth: **Thursday 12th November!** Available are a total of 76 Tickets - so don't delay in getting yours! Options are:
 1. \$38 for theatre seats in rows (x40)
 2. \$45 at tables of four, which will include a light supper (x36)
- HBMS Society's **Official 50th Birthday Celebration** at Taradale Club on **Saturday 21st November** (limited to 100 due to space) Tickets will be \$35pp and include afternoon tea. , followed by a fun celebratory event for HBMS members (at no cost) will be held at a later date.
- **Christmas Lunch** - Early December - date TBC



Message from our MS Community RN Julie:

Happy Spring everyone.

It's been lovely to see all the spring bulbs and blossom on the trees although the weather is still changeable, and winter bugs are still lurking.

With Spring comes hay fever season. Common symptoms are frequent sneezing, a runny or blocked nose and itchy, red or watery eyes. There are some good tips on how to self care if you are experiencing these symptoms on www.healthify.nz Have a chat to your local Pharmacist too as they will be able to recommend the best treatment to manage your symptoms.

If you would like to catch up please let me know, happy to chat over the phone, by email or in person.

Take care.

Julie

MS Community Nurse



If you would like to make contact please let me know. Email me on julie@mshawkesbay.org.nz or text/phone on 027 733 0304.

<https://vote.nz/2026-general-election/resources/information-in-accessible-formats>



Bladder, Bowel or Sexual Symptoms? Pelvic Health Physiotherapy May Help

Living with multiple sclerosis can involve challenges that are not always easy to talk about. Bladder urgency, leakage, constipation, difficulty emptying the bowel, pelvic discomfort and changes in sexual function can all affect work, exercise, travel, sleep, relationships and confidence.

Although these symptoms are common in people with MS, that does not mean you simply have to live with them.

Managing the neurological impact of MS on pelvic health is a specialty within a specialty. Effective care requires an understanding of both pelvic health and the complex neurological changes associated with MS. Physiotherapists who have undertaken relevant postgraduate training can assess how changes in sensation, muscle control, mobility, fatigue and spasticity may be influencing bladder, bowel and sexual function.

It is about more than pelvic floor exercises

MS can affect the messages travelling between the brain, spinal cord, bladder, bowel and pelvic floor muscles. As a result, the pelvic floor may be weak, overactive, slow to respond or difficult to coordinate. This is why generic advice to “do more pelvic floor exercises” is not always helpful.

A pelvic health physiotherapist with appropriate neurological training and experience can help identify what is happening and develop an individual plan. Depending on your symptoms, this might include:

- pelvic floor muscle strengthening, coordination or relaxation
- strategies for managing bladder urgency and leakage
- advice about bladder and bowel routines
- techniques to make bowel emptying easier

- exercises adapted around fatigue, altered sensation, mobility changes or spasticity
- support for pelvic pain or sexual concerns.

Research suggests that pelvic floor muscle training and other rehabilitation approaches may improve urinary symptoms and quality of life for some people with MS. Evidence relating to bowel and sexual symptoms is still developing, so assessment and treatment should always be individualised.

The impact may extend well beyond the bathroom. Better symptom management may mean feeling more confident leaving home, sleeping with fewer interruptions, returning to exercise, enjoying greater intimacy or worrying less about finding the nearest toilet.

Please be aware - some symptoms - particularly difficulty emptying the bladder, recurrent urinary infections, blood in the urine, or new and rapidly worsening bladder or bowel changes - require medical assessment from your GP or neurologist.

Starting the conversation can be difficult - but it may be the first step towards greater comfort, confidence and control.

Leanne Wait

Pelvic Health Physiotherapist

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Post Graduate training **Bowel and Bladder Care for the Neurologically Involved Client**