MS INFO CHANNEL

Guide · Evidence Check · Conversation aids

What Really Helps: Alternative Paths in MS, Put to the Evidence Test

Proven, unclear, disproven, dangerous: a calm guide with study results, checklists and talking aids for your doctor's visit

PDF BOOK · A4

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Preface: You may ask, you may check

This book helps you sort the many offers around MS calmly and clearly.

After a diagnosis, advice arrives from everywhere. Friends send links. Websites promise miracles. Shops sell capsules, teas and cures. Some of it is sensible. Some is harmless but useless. And some can hurt you.

This book helps you sort it out. It relies on guidelines, review articles and large studies. Every number has a source. The sources are listed at the end of the book and are clickable in the PDF.

We do not tell you what to do. We tell you what research showed up to November 2026, and where it shows nothing. That is also an answer.

REMEMBER The most important sentence in this book

Complementary options can sit alongside your disease-modifying treatment. For **replacing** that treatment with any of the options discussed here, the German guideline finds no study basis [1].

How the book is built

- **Chapter 1** shows you how to check any offer yourself.
- **Chapters 2 to 4** cover exercise, mind-body methods and diet. The evidence is best here.
- **Chapters 5 and 6** cover vitamin D, supplements and herbal products. Some is proven, some unclear, some dangerous.
- **Chapters 7 to 10** cover acupuncture, cannabis, stem cells, bee venom and miracle promises.
- **Chapters 11 to 13** cover money and insurance, the talk with your care team, and case examples.
- **Chapter 14** answers the most common questions. An overview, glossary and sources follow.

INFO The four levels used in this book

- **Proven**: good studies or guidelines support the statement for people with MS.
- **Unclear**: there are hints, but studies are small, short or contradictory.
- **Disproven**: good studies found no benefit.
- **Dangerous**: harm is documented, or expert bodies explicitly warn.

ATTENTION What this book is not

It is not advice for your individual case and no replacement for your neurologist. It gives no dosages. It promises no cure. Discuss every change with your care team.

INFO Germany and the rest of the world

Studies apply worldwide. Rules on insurance, licensing and prescriptions are described for Germany and marked as such. Other countries have other rules. Ask your doctor, pharmacist or national MS society.

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

- before you start a product you bought yourself
- before you change or stop your prescribed MS treatment
- immediately for new weakness, loss of vision or severe dizziness: call your local emergency number (112 in Germany and across the EU)

1 The Evidence Check: How to Test Any Offer

Five questions are often enough to place an offer. You do not need a medical degree.

Complementary or alternative?

Two words are often mixed up. **Complementary** means in addition to effective treatment. **Alternative** means instead of it. The difference is large.

The German guideline opens its lifestyle section with the thought that a disease lasting decades needs a whole-person health concept. Exercise, diet, not smoking and mental health play a part [1]. That is the frame of this book: you can do a lot for yourself, but as an addition.

Table 1: Adding to or replacing treatment

Term	Meaning	Example
Complementary	comes on top of disease-modifying treatment	endurance training next to your long-term therapy
Alternative	replaces that treatment	stopping therapy to follow one protocol
Symptom relief	targets complaints such as spasticity or fatigue	exercise against exhaustion
Disease modification	targets relapses and disability	prescribed disease-modifying therapy

Source: [1] German MS guideline (DGN) 2026.

REMEMBER

Ask first: does this add to my treatment or replace it? If it replaces it, caution is right.

How experts rank evidence

Not every study weighs the same. A large, well-run study with a comparison group says more than a personal story. A collection of many studies, such as a Cochrane review, says even more if the single studies are good.

Table 2: Evidence levels used in this book

Level	How to recognise it
high	large trial, reliable Cochrane review or guideline with strong consensus
medium	smaller trial or review with limitations
low	small or weak studies, very low certainty
opinion	expert body without study basis

Source: [1] German MS guideline (DGN) 2026.

The traffic light of the German MS Society

In January 2023 the German MS Society (DMSG) published a 46-page brochure with ten chapters on alternative and complementary therapies. It uses a colour scale: red means not recommended, yellow means not evidence-based but not harmful, green means evidence-based [4]. According to the press release, caution applies for example to bee venom therapy [4].

INFO Our note on the brochure

We did not check how the brochure rates individual methods, so we do not repeat any single rating. You can read the brochure at the DMSG (in German).