

Muscular Dystrophy Association Motor Neuron Disease Clinic

At

The University of Utah
Department of Neurology

Peer Pressure

What is peer pressure in the setting of ALS?

“Peer Pressure” is when friends encourage you to do something that you have not thought about doing on your own. When you were young examples were pressure to do daring deeds. With ALS we use the term to describe encouragement from family and friends to do things about ALS that you might not have wished to do on your own.

All of these are offered with good will from family and friends but they put you under pressure;

- If you don't do them you run the risk of insulting your family member or friend.
- On the other hand, if you do them you may be doing something that you did not really think you should do – thus you feel peer pressure.

Examples include:

- Getting a second opinion -
There is nothing wrong with a second opinion if you wish, and we certainly do not object in any way. Our suggestion is to go to a large medical center with experience in ALS as opposed to a local neurologist. We will help you make an appointment and supply you with records.
- Consulting or being treated by an alternative medicine provider -
There are many different ways to treat the body. We focus on Western medicine because it has provided most of the information on ALS. This is a personal decision and we will be happy to answer questions.
- Taking a non-prescription treatment, some of which may be expensive -
There are many people taking non-prescription treatments for a wide range of disorders. None of these have been tested for effectiveness. Few are harmful, but taking a large number can cause side effects, and we will be happy to tell you what we know about them. Some can be very expensive, up to tens of thousands of dollars, and sometimes this money can be spent in other ways to help you.

None of these examples are wrong; whatever you truly wish to do is right! We are available to answer your questions.

Finally, sometimes people have a hard time saying “no” to a suggestion. If you are having trouble saying “no” to family or friends we can be your excuse.