

## MS Walk: May 3

The Mandarin Walk for Multiple Sclerosis (MS Walk) returns to Dufferin County (Orangeville) on May 3rd. The event is set to take place starting from Montgomery Village Public School, 70 Montgomery Blvd. Check-in starts at 8 a.m. and the Walk starts at 9:30 a.m.

The 5km or 10km route is open to walkers, runners and wheelers of all ages and abilities. Refreshments will be served upon the participants return back to Banting.

The Dufferin County leg of the MS Walk is just one of 160 walks taking place across the country, on various days, in 2015. Proceeds from the walk, raised through participant pledges, is used to fund vital services for people living with MS.

?The MS Walk is a celebration of the power we have to change the lives of Canadians with MS. By coming together at the MS Walk and through our fundraising efforts, we make a tangible and life-changing difference to thousands of people with MS. The MS Walk is a heartwarming and meaningful community gathering, and it's a chance to reconnect with old friends and make new ones along the way! reads the official MS Walk website.

About MS: Canada has the highest rate of MS in the world. An estimated 100,000 Canadians live with the disease. While it is most often diagnosed in young adults, aged 15 to 40, it can affect younger children and older adults. MS is unpredictable and can affect vision, hearing, memory, balance and mobility. Its effects can be physical, emotional and financial. Currently there is no cure but each day, researchers are learning more about what causes MS and are zeroing in on ways to prevent it.

MS is thought to be an autoimmune disease, which means the immune system designed to protect against foreign intruders such as viruses and bacteria attacks tissues in the body. In the case of MS, the tissue that is targeted is myelin. Myelin is a protective insulation that surrounds nerve fibres in the brain and spinal cord. Without myelin the communication between nerve cells is disrupted and the body does not receive the appropriate instructions to perform basic functions like speaking, seeing, walking and learning. Myelin damage can also lead to deterioration of the exposed nerves, resulting in irreversible tissue damage. A chronic neurological disease, MS can have a significant impact on a range of functions governed by the brain and can also have a dramatic effect on energy levels, sleep and overall quality of life. Learn more about the symptoms of MS at [mssociety.ca](http://mssociety.ca)

Hosted by the MS Society of Canada, the Mandarin Walk for MS is funding scientific research to investigate the many aspects of the disease including:

Progression/therapies ? potential therapies for MS, seeking to improve imaging technology to better visualize tissues in the brain;

Cause/risk factors ? potential triggers of MS and why some factors may increase susceptibility to MS;

Nerve damage/repair ? cellular mechanisms that result in damage and repair of myelin and underlying nerve cells;

Symptom management/quality of life ? how MS affects day-to-day living and developing treatments that effectively manage symptoms.

?When you fund raise for the MS Society, you're investing in an organization whose purpose is to end MS and improve the quality of life for those who live with the disease. The MS Society is dedicated to funding research, government advocacy, financial support and programs and services that empower Canadians affected by multiple sclerosis.?

Specifically, the MS Society dedicates funds to programs and services, research, public education and awareness, chapter and volunteer support and development, government and community relations.

So far, 71 walkers and 6 teams have registered for the Dufferin MS Walk. With just 46 days until the walk takes place, organizers are hoping more people will register to walk, or support a walker.

Local organizer, Amanda Snow told The Free Press, ?We look forward to seeing everyone out on May 3 for the Mandarin MS Walk! Walking is part of the Walk, but it's not all about walking. It's about sharing, supporting, celebrating and making a difference.?

?There is no cost associated with registering for the MS Walk however, a minimum fundraising total of \$125 is required to receive an MS Walk t-shirt,? Snow said. ?On event day, all participants who have not raised funds in advance will be asked for a donation of \$20. At this time you will also be asked to sign a participant waiver.?

For more information, contact Amanda Snow at [amanda.snow@mssociety.ca](mailto:amanda.snow@mssociety.ca) or 1-800-268-7582 ext. 3152.

Anonymous donations can also be made to:

MS Walk

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**By Wendy Gabrek**