

# bike

# MS

bike to  
create a world  
free of MS

## WHAT I WISH I KNEW BEFORE THE RIDE

You've accepted the challenge and now you don't know where to start. Bike MS can be challenging (yet incredibly rewarding) for first time riders. Veteran Bike MS Rider Jennifer Childs has developed a few pointers to help you with your first Bike MS experience one mile at a time.

### YOU HAVE OPTIONS

The first thing you need to know is it's not a race, it's a ride. The next thing you need to know is you have options! Everyone knows this ride as the MS 150, however its not 150 miles at all! We have renamed the ride Bike MS because there are multiple options, none of which are 150 miles.

Day one has three route options: 37-miles, 71-miles and 109-miles. Day two has two options 37-miles and 71-miles. You can choose to do the first day then go home or stay overnight and ride the second day!

### EQUIPMENT MAKES A HUGE DIFFERENCE

First there's the bike itself. Although some people choose to do the ride on a mountain bike, the bike of choice is usually a road bike. The main difference is the tires. While mountain bikes have flat, knobby tires, the tires on a road bike are skinny and flat. There is a substantial difference in weight and friction between these two types of tires and the road bike tires will make it easier. You should choose whatever bike you are most comfortable with. The seat on the bike is another mat-

ter. You will prefer the small skinny seat of a road bike. If you're riding anything less than 20 miles, big cushy seats with shocks feel great, on longer rides they lose their appeal. As you start to ride more than 20 miles, you will want to invest in bike clothes. Bike jerseys and shorts pull moisture away from your body, which helps regulate your body temperature. Bike shorts include padding right where you need it.

### TRAINING – DO IT NOW

The fun begins. Start training early and do it often. Training will make it possible for you to complete this journey your undertaking. A good way to jump start training is to participate in our official

Bike MS training rides! There are rides from advanced to no rider left behind rides! You can see our full training ride schedule at [bike.msmidamerica.org](http://bike.msmidamerica.org).

### PRE-CHECK IN – DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE MORNING OF THE RIDE

At some point you have to check in. You will bring your envelope containing cash or checks you have collected during your fundraising. Please have the money counted, the envelope sealed and filled out before checking in. Just because you hand in the envelope doesn't mean you have to stop fundraising! People can still use your web page to

donate online with their credit card and you can still collect checks and mail them to the MS Society after the ride. The deadline to be eligible for a prize is Oct. 31. We have multiple early check-ins the week of and the week before the ride. Look for e-mails, Facebook posts and to our web site to find the early check-in nearest you.

### THE START LINE

- Plan to arrive before 6 a.m. You need plenty of time to gather your gear, take luggage and tent to the drop-off location. Make sure your luggage has your rider number attached. They will be sorted in Lawrence.
- It may be a long walk from your car, so know you may have to make more than one trip.
- Breakfast is served that morning for a fee \$5. Riders and guests are welcome to eat before the ride. Nerves at the start line can make you feel like not eating breakfast, but you really need fuel.
- Dress for the weather. A 50 degree morning at 20 mph on the

- bike can feel like an arctic chill. Layers can be removed and either stowed on your bike (consider bike packs) or dropped at the rest stops. Rest stop volunteers will attach your rider number to your belongings. You can pick up dropped items at "Tossed & Found" in the community building.
- Spectators are encouraged to attend the start. They should plan to wait to leave until the last riders have gone. Guests may also meet you in Lawrence at the finish and back at Garmin on Sunday. They should know that they need to avoid the route.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US AT 1-800-344-4867 OR [BIKE.MSMIDAMERICA.ORG](http://BIKE.MSMIDAMERICA.ORG)

## ON THE ROAD

- At the start, riders will be released in waves of about 200 at a time, about 3-5 minutes between waves. If you've never ridden in a large group, it may be beneficial to partake in some training rides with some large groups to know what it feels like. Bikes are close together, unpredictable stops, passing and swerves can happen. Be aware of those around you. It can take several miles for the pack to loosen up.
- Rest stops are located every 8-12 miles along the route. You are not required to stop at rest stops, but they are there if you need them. Each rest stop is different. At most, you will find snacks, water, potties and a medical crew. You should bring your own Tylenol/Advil/Aleve. Take it before you leave for the day and

throughout the day. It won't eliminate all pain, but it does help to get a jump on it.

- Rest Stop Wisdom:
  - 1) Take a breather, eat a snack, use the potty and get back on your bike ASAP. Veteran riders will tell you, the longer you stop, the harder it is to get your body moving again.
  - 2) PB&J is your best friend
  - 3) If there is a big silver Opies water tanker truck at the rest stop, pour out whatever water you have and refill with Opies water. Opies water is the best.
  - 4) If there is frozen lemonade, by all means stop and enjoy it.

## SAGS & SUPER SAGS

SAG stands for Support and Gear. SAG Wagons patrol the route all day long. They are there to pick you up if you need a ride. If you're fatigued and can't go anymore, you can catch a SAG. If you or your bike is injured, you may catch a SAG. It's easiest to catch a SAG at a rest stop, however they will pick you up right on the road. If you are stopped on the road, most will slow down to ask if you need a ride. SAG vehicles are marked with signs and sometimes a flashing light on the top. A regular SAG will only be assigned one route, between this rest stop to that rest stop. They will only take you to the next rest stop. Ask volunteers at the rest stop where to catch the SAG to the next stop. If you decide you cannot go any longer and just want to get

to Lawrence, you may take the Super SAG.

The Super SAG is a bus that first stops at the lunch stop. Know that the Super SAG will not leave the lunch stop until the last rider has passed the lunch stop. You may find that it's faster to SAG from one rest stop to the next and to the next and so on until you get to Lawrence. Your decision.

All day long, please thank the volunteers. You cannot thank too many volunteers. We cannot ride without the amazing MS Society volunteers. Thank the rest stop workers, thank the traffic directors standing in the street, thank the policemen watching for cross traffic on the highway, everyone. THANK THEM!

## THE FINISH LINE - DAY 1

- Check in at the Check-In Tent just inside the finish line queue. If you SAG in to Lawrence, go to the Check-in Tent to let them know you arrived. There is water and snacks there.
- You may take your bike to overnight parking next to the community center. You may park your bicycle in the park at your own risk. You may also pick up your luggage here.
- Showers are located at the east end of the park. Everyone wants you to take a shower before dinner. Don't forget to pack a towel,

toiletries, clean clothes for the overnight and comfortable shoes.

- There will be dinner served in the community center that night. It is usually a pasta dinner with dessert. If you have booked a hotel, trams about the park will take you to local hotels. See the site map when you arrive to find tram stop locations.
- Live entertainment will be playing all day long. MS Society staff and volunteers will make announcements and hand out door prizes in the evening. The stage usually keeps going until 9-10 p.m.

## START & FINISH - DAY 2

- The start opens at 7 a.m. You must leave by 8 a.m., or you will be SAG'd to the first rest stop. You are responsible for repacking your overnight bags and taking down your tent.
- Please allow enough time for packing, stretching out aches and pains and to eat some breakfast. Breakfast inside the community center (free to riders and volunteers) opens at 5:30 a.m.
- Day Two is not pretty for some. If you have trained adequately, it's just another day on the bike. If you did not train much or at all, you will probably survive Day One just fine, but Day Two may be too much to face. There is always the SAG wagon. If you don't ride on Day Two, please consider cheering for your Team at the finish line.
- The Day Two route is not simply "back from whence you came". It's a different route from the previous day. The short route will be

37-miles and the long route 67-miles.

- When you get to the finish line, volunteers will be there to hand you a rider medal. Get it because you earned it. But be aware of riders ahead who may stop suddenly. Try not to stop suddenly yourself. Many riders get all the way to the finish, only to end with a crash.
- Be proud of what you've accomplished. Many people with MS will be at the finish line to cheer you and hand you your medal. Take a few moments to talk to them and let them know you know why we ride. We ride to stop the effects of MS. We ride for them.
- Finish line lunch is served. You can also sign up for the next year's Bike MS ride for a discounted rate there.
- Your luggage will be there waiting for you. It is sorted by your rider number. Find it, pack up, and enjoy the rest of your day.