



spotlight on health

Taking The Heat, Coolly



(NAPSA)—For two months every year, firefighter Bobbie Junge works 16-hour days preparing for the wraths of the wildfire season. When duty calls, Junge, who has multiple sclerosis (MS), ventures deep into the coarse North American wilderness to face the heat of a thousand-acre fire ravaging a mountainside.

MS, a disease of the brain and spinal cord, can cause vision and speech problems and impair judgment and motor skills—a challenge for anyone but especially for Junge, whose job is both physically grueling and perilous. But since she was diagnosed in 1993, the 49-year-old wife of a former Air Force member has only moved forward.

“At first I was really upset,” she says, “but I soon realized that this was an opportunity to set new goals for myself. By reaching these goals, I’d be fighting back.”

Junge aimed high and moved quickly. In 1994, she earned her pilot’s license. Soon after, she was recruited by a federal wildland firefighting division in Arizona. Today, the multifaceted Junge is not only a skilled firefighter, but also a radio and aerial communications specialist and search-and-rescue dispatcher.

That’s not to say Junge doesn’t have occasional setbacks. The disease, which affects an estimated

350,000 Americans, is often characterized by stable periods interspersed with periods of attacks. To manage her symptoms, Junge takes an injectable medicine called Betaseron® (interferon beta-1b) for SC injection, as well as daily vitamin supplements combined with a dedicated workout regimen.

Recently, a room-temperature formulation of Betaseron became available, offering greater convenience to MS patients. The new formulation doesn’t need to be refrigerated, so Junge has more options for transporting and storing the drug when outdoors.

“You never know if your assignments are going to take you to the Rockies, the Cascade Mountains, or somewhere even farther out. It’s real tough when you’re living in a tent and have to worry about finding a refrigerator or ice packs to store the Betaseron,” says Junge. “This new version has made a tremendous difference in improving my mobility. It’s become much easier to take my medication when I’m out in the field.”

Despite having lived with MS for more than 11 years, Junge says she’s never slowed down and never looks back.

Full prescribing information for Betaseron (interferon beta-1b) for SC injection is available online at www.betaseron.com.