

Extavia Approved for Multiple Sclerosis

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MONDAY, Aug. 17 (HealthDay News) -- Extavia (interferon beta-1b) has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat multiple sclerosis, drug maker Novartis said Monday.

The drug was approved for people in whom the autoimmune disease has just relapsed, or for those in whom MS is newly diagnosed, the company said in a news release.

MS affects about 400,000 people in the United States, Novartis said, of whom about 80 percent have the relapsing-remitting form. In people with MS, the body's immune system attacks the protective tissue surrounding nerve fibers that transmit electric signals to the brain. Interferon beta 1-b has been used as a standard treatment for MS for more than 16 years, Novartis said.