# MS Gallery – Jan

**“I try to live my life to the fullest. You never know what the future may hold.”**

**Jan**

**Age:** 39
**Hometown:** Amsterdam, The Netherlands
**Onset of symptoms:** 1999
**First symptom experienced:** Loss of vision in his left eye
**Diagnosed:** 1999
**Started treatment:** 1999

Jan’s whole world turned upside down the day he learned he had MS. “I felt emptiness. I’d seen bad cases and I couldn’t face it.”

At the time, Jan had a successful career, a girlfriend Natasha, and close family and friends. But after learning he had MS, Jan became a different person – he stopped working and caring about life and the people around him.

Family members, particularly Jan’s brother and sister, found it difficult to accept his diagnosis. However, “my friends reacted well – they were supportive and really helped me through the hard times – particularly Natasha.”

Jan first realized something wasn’t right when awoke one morning in 1999 to find he couldn’t see out of his left eye. His optician found nothing, so Jan turned to a neurologist for help. Fortunately, the neurologist knew the importance of early treatment and started him immediately on a disease-modifying medication. “The treatment has become part of my routine, like brushing my teeth. After some practice, it’s easy to administer.”

More than seven years later, Jan has gotten his life back on track. Today, he and Natasha are married and have a baby girl, Juna (pictured), with another child on the way. Jan also started his own company that particularly employs people with MS.

Jan is optimistic about his future and encourages others diagnosed with MS to seek help immediately. “Once you have your life in order again, you have to start doing something with it – this is very important. I don’t want to tell people how to deal with MS, but I hope they find something in my experience that they can use.”

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