

Axial Spondyloarthritis (AxSpA)

Discussion Guide

If you're living with axial spondyloarthritis (AxSpA), it's important that you feel empowered to advocate for yourself and to speak openly with your rheumatologist about managing your disease. This guide will help you to prepare for your appointment to ensure a productive conversation about your AxSpA goals and concerns.



BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

This comprehensive tracking tool will help you organize your information effectively. Oftentimes, patients tend to underreport their symptoms. People might also forget the extent to which AxSpA impacts their life. Document not only your symptoms but also any side effects from medications you're taking and any changes in your lifestyle.

SYMPTOMS

Record the intensity of your symptoms in the last month: 1 = no | 2 = mild | 3 = moderate | 4 = severe

	1	2	3	4
Pain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flare-ups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:				

IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE

Record the number of days in the last month lost in:

Social activities _____

Work _____

Academics _____

Sleep _____

Hobbies _____

Family and intimate relationships _____

Other: _____

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Record your recent lifestyle habits:

Diet _____

Exercise _____

Smoking _____

Cannabis/CBD use (recreational) _____

Cannabis/CBD use (medical) _____

Alcohol consumption _____

Other: _____

MEDICATIONS

List the medications you've been prescribed and any accompanying side effects:

Name of medication _____ Duration _____

Side Effects _____ Improvements _____

Name of medication _____ Duration _____

Side Effects _____ Improvements _____

Other alternative treatments (physiotherapy, acupuncture, tai chi, etc.) _____

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DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT

Create a meaningful and impactful conversation during your appointment using these 3 steps:

1 | COME PREPARED

Come prepared with this discussion guide. Remember, this is your chance to advocate for yourself. You've diligently tracked your symptoms and concerns – don't hold back. Your insights matter. Use the tracker to present a clear picture of your condition.



2 | COLLABORATE

Collaborate with your health care provider to set impactful goals for managing your symptoms.

I want to feel: _____

I want to be able to: _____

Additional lifestyle goals: _____

3 | ASK QUESTIONS

Ask questions. For example:

1. How long should it typically take for my medication(s) to start working?
2. Should I be aware of any other medications and treatment options? What are the benefits or risks of these treatment options?
3. Should I be exercising regularly? Are there any specific exercises that should be avoided?
4. Will any dietary supplements or vitamins help? Are there any that should be avoided?
5. Can you recommend any pain management considerations or assistive devices/solutions for enhanced mobility?

Your questions: _____

AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT

The Canadian Spondyloarthritis Association (CSA) provides information, resources, and support for people living with AxSpA, as well as their caregivers.

Visit spondylitis.ca to learn more.

Review goals discussed with your health care provider and reflect on progress monthly.

Keep monitoring your symptoms, medications, and lifestyle changes to ensure effective management.



The information presented here is intended for educational purposes only and is not meant to be a diagnostic tool. Always consult your healthcare provider for personalized guidance regarding your health.

