

Lifestyle and Personal Goals

What to Discuss with Your Health Care Team

You can personalize your goals by using the following suggestions as a guide.

Your personal and lifestyle goals may be different from others because of your inflammatory arthritis state and your age.

If you're a caregiver, it might be helpful to be part of the goal discussion.



Print this, circle the items you'd like to discuss with your health care team, and bring it to your appointment. By working together and creating your wellness plan, you can take an active role in improving the management of your inflammatory arthritis.

When establishing your exercise goals, consider:

According to the American College of Rheumatology, people with inflammatory arthritis who exercise have: less pain, more energy, improved sleep, and better day-to-day function.

Exercise goals – You are interested in finding out more about:

- Walking, biking, swimming
- Physical strength/endurance exercises I can do at home to regain strength, ability and independence
- Exercises that can help improve my flexibility and balance
- Year-round activities that can help manage my symptoms
- My current fitness level and how I can improve it
- Taking up a sport or exercise that I previously enjoyed
- Local resources for exercise and fitness tips
- Professionals in the community who can help me reach my fitness goal
- Other: _____

Inactivity can lead to a wide range of health risks or concerns:

Type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease, decreased pain tolerance, weak muscles, stiff joints and poor balance.

The “**Top ten exercises. Keeping things simple.**” fact sheet from The Arthritis Society has a series of fast, simple, effective exercises. You can download it and discuss it at your appointment. It's available at: <http://www.arthritis.ca/document.doc?id=329>

Physical Activity & Arthritis Guide from The Arthritis Society. Download at: <http://www.arthritis.ca/document.doc?id=321>

Exercise and Arthritis Fact Sheet from The American College of Rheumatology. Download at: http://www.rheumatology.org/Practice/Clinical/Patients/Diseases_And_Conditions/Exercise_and_Arthritis/

Print this, circle the items you'd like to discuss with your health care team, and bring it to your appointment. By working together and creating your wellness plan, you can take an active role in improving the management of your inflammatory arthritis.



You may want to consider speaking to others with arthritis, (through support groups for people with inflammatory arthritis) particularly if you find it difficult to share with friends and family.

Relationship goals – You would like to talk about:

- Participating in family events – weddings, baptism, other

- Family outings/vacations – hiking, travel, sports, cooking
- Personal relationships and how to set limits with friends and family ahead of an event
- Sex and intimacy – My sexual relationship with my partner does not have to suffer because of arthritis. If sex is a regular part of my relationship, I should try to keep it so
- How to say no to events that will exhaust or irritate me
- Managing others' expectations of me
- How to have a backup plan in place in case my arthritis flares up the day of an important event
- Ways to participate in events with family and friends even when my arthritis is acting up
- Information – recommended websites/books to help family/friends better understand my arthritis
- Other: _____

Print this, circle the items you'd like to discuss with your health care team, and bring it to your appointment. By working together and creating your wellness plan, you can take an active role in improving the management of your inflammatory arthritis.



Work, education, or general interest goals – You need to discuss:

- Returning to my work, career changes, working overtime – overall considerations
- Tips to help me be more efficient or organized while I work or pursue a hobby or further my education
- Sharing my work or hobby goals with others
- Setting productivity goals, should I be more flexible in my expectations?
- Tools that could help reach my work, education or general interest goals
- Referrals to help me reach my goals – physical therapist, occupational therapist, friend, family member, support groups, online community, other: _____

Notes: _____

Nutrition Tips

You may want to consider discussing nutrition and diet and its benefits with your team.



Nutrition plan – Your diet

One of the most important things is to eat a balanced and healthy diet. If you need to, you can work with your health care team to achieve and maintain a healthy weight to help relieve the pressure in your hips, knees, ankles and feet that can lead to pain and mobility problems. Encourage your family or caregiver to actively join you in leading a healthy lifestyle, by eating a balanced diet low in fat and high in fresh, nutrient-rich foods.

The following are examples of questions you can ask your health care team about nutrition and your diet:

- Could you recommend a professional who could help me?
- Are there any resources or support groups I can turn to for help?
- Is there a way I can record my progress to best help me?

Notes: _____

You may find the Arthritis Society's "**Nutrition and Arthritis**" booklet helpful. It's available at: <http://www.arthritis.ca/document.doc?id=322>

Try incorporating some of these healthy recipes from **The Arthritis Foundation** into your meal plan. Go to: <http://www.arthritistoday.org/what-you-can-do/eating-well/recipes/>

Traveling Goals

If one of your personal goals is to travel, your health care team is an excellent source for helpful tips that can help you enjoy your trip as comfortably as possible.



If you don't feel you understand something your health care team has discussed, don't be embarrassed to let them know and ask them to explain it more clearly. Remember that you are a part of the team managing your inflammatory arthritis.

Talk to them about:

- Deciding on a time when I'm most likely to feel my best
- Traveling during the holidays – is that a good option for me?
- Building rest days into my trip
- Any necessary immunizations I may need
- What suitcases may be the best option for me
- Carrying my medical history and a list of my current medications
- Special insurance plans for my arthritis
- My medication requirements – if refrigeration is required, what options are available while I'm traveling

Notes: _____

Many people with inflammatory arthritis lead happy, fulfilling lives by communicating, sharing, and learning to best deal with change and setting goals. It starts with taking control over how you live with your inflammatory arthritis.