



Prepare for your Appointment: Key Questions for Your Healthcare Professional

Whether it's your first appointment or one of many, here are some questions to consider asking. Not every question will apply to every appointment or type of healthcare professional. Review these questions and use them when necessary.

What did the test result show?

Your specialist and sometimes your family doctor will order tests to rule out various conditions and to help make a diagnosis. Many forms of arthritis can be challenging to diagnose. Ask your doctor what your test results mean for you and your treatment plan. You can ask for a printed copy of any blood test results or imaging study reports, but you may be required to pay the costs of making these copies. Some labs will provide you with online reports from your tests.

When should I notice improvement from my current treatment?

After diagnosis, your doctor might prescribe medication or recommend a treatment regimen. While every patient responds differently to treatment, your doctor will be able to give you an idea of what to expect. Some medications, such as those used to manage pain symptoms, act relatively quickly. Others are known to take longer to make a difference you can feel.

Your doctor should be able to explain:

- the goal of your treatment;
- when to expect some positive results; and
- how long it might take to determine whether the treatment is a good fit for you

To learn more about medications used for the treatment of arthritis, visit the Arthritis Society's [Medication](#) page.

If my current treatment doesn't work, what are my options?

If you are someone who likes to think ahead, you may find comfort in knowing what comes next. It allows you to mentally prepare. Visit the Arthritis Society's [Your Patient Journey](#) webpage for more information.

In addition to my prescribed medications, what should I be doing to help manage my arthritis?

Complementary or alternative treatments can help you manage your symptoms. Discuss these with your doctor to determine if any of these approaches might be right for you.

Additionally, lifestyle changes, (such as weight management, nutrition, exercise, physical or occupational therapy) and self-management tools (such as mindfulness, meditation, heat/cold, or assistive devices) can be useful components of your treatment plan.

Tap into your treatment team member's experience and ask for suggestions above and beyond medications. Be specific when you discuss what aspects of arthritis bother you the most and how it affects your ability to perform important daily activities.

What does my future hold?

Arthritis is a lifelong condition and you will notice changes periodically. Your doctor can help you to understand what to expect in the near future and longer-term with regard to potential flare ups, control of the disease and its progression, as well as possible future treatments.

Source: adapted from <http://arthritis.about.com/od/buildyourhealthcareteam/f/6-Questions-Arthritis-Patients-Must-Ask-Their-Doctor.htm>