

RA
TALK OVER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

YOU CAN BE A POWERFUL VOICE IN REACHING YOUR REMISSION GOALS

This brochure is for people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). It provides basic information about RA and management of RA, with a focus on remission as a treatment goal. You can discuss treatment goals with your doctor to assist in creating the right RA treatment plan for you.





UNDERSTANDING RA

WHAT IS RA?

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) causes joint inflammation and pain. It happens when the immune system attacks parts of your body, specifically the lining of the joints.¹ In RA, your immune system causes inflammation in your joints, leading to pain and other symptoms, such as morning stiffness and can eventually result in bone erosion and joint deformity.² RA is a chronic (lasting a long time) condition.³

The inflammation and symptoms caused by RA can sometimes be worse and this is called a flare. When inflammation and symptoms lessen or disappear, you may be in remission or close to it. You can think of flares and remission as the high and low points of your disease symptoms.⁴

TREATING RA

Remission may be a possible treatment goal for your RA.

Reaching remission in Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) looks different for everyone. In its simplest form it means no or very little symptoms are present in your body.^{5,6} If your doctor says it is possible for you to reach remission, it could lead to very little or no inflammation, soreness or pain, allowing you to get back to the activities you love.⁴ Although remission for RA doesn't mean the complete eradication of disease from your body, it could mean that joint damage stops where it is.^{4,7}

Be sure to talk about shared treatment goals and discuss your progress with your rheumatologist so your treatment plan can be customised for you. VOICE YOUR VISION FOR REMISSION

TALKING POINTS FOR YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT

1 BE SPECIFIC AND SHARE YOUR GOALS

Start by thinking about the life you want to live and setting clear, realistic goals. You and your doctor are partners in your RA journey, working closely together to seek success in managing your RA. After this, you can work with your doctor to develop a shared management plan to help you work towards achieving them.

WHAT AREA OF YOUR WELLBEING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE MOST IMPROVEMENT IN? WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE OVER THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS?

2 EVALUATE YOUR CURRENT WELLBEING

Only you have first-hand experience of your RA. That's why it's very important to help your doctor understand your RA. It is OK to say if you are not doing well or not coping, but it is just as important to share if you are doing well or better than before.

CONSIDERING YOUR ARTHRITIS OVERALL, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL WELLBEING DURING THE PAST WEEK?

1 10
VERY VERY
BAD GOOD

HOW WOULD YOU RANK YOUR CURRENT PHYSICAL WELLBEING, SUCH AS ABILITY TO DO DAILY TASKS, SLEEP, PAIN, FATIGUE ETC)

WHY HAVE YOU GIVEN THOSE RANKINGS?

3 DOCUMENT YOUR SYMPTOMS

Thinking about your activity over the past few weeks, was there anything that felt out of reach or challenging?

HOW HAS RA IMPACTED YOU OVER THE LAST 3 MONTHS?

- What have been the symptoms?
- How severe have they been?
- How frequently have they been occurring?
- How long did they last?

4 EVALUATE YOUR CURRENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

If you don't think your treatment plan is working well, tell your doctor and find out if a change is needed.

- Do you think your treatment is helping you?
- Are you concerned about anything with your treatment?

It's important to be open about your treatment even if you find it difficult to discuss your concerns.

For example, if you are experiencing side effects or if you are having a hard time adhering to your treatment, this is important for your physician to know.

- What are your questions or comments?

5 VOICE YOUR VISION FOR REMISSION

Remission could possibly be an achievable treatment goal and could redefine what 'better' looks like for you. Setting remission as a goal when living with RA could mean improved symptoms and better quality of life.³ It may also prevent further disease progression and damage to your joints.^{5,8}

- Is remission an achievable treatment goal for me?
- What do you think an achievable treatment goal could be? How can we reach this goal?

6 ASK QUESTIONS

If there's something else you don't understand or if there is information you need, don't be shy about asking. Write down your questions so you don't forget:

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