

No matter how long it's been since you learned you have ankylosing spondylitis (AS), or how long you have been on treatment, taking stock of your progress regularly is a good idea. A range of effective treatments and therapies are available for AS and can each work differently depending on the person to ultimately help manage the daily challenges caused by AS.

Checking in with your healthcare team is critical to see whether you are achieving the level of control you would like. This simple discussion guide will help you reassess the impact AS may be having on your life and inform future conversations with your best ally, your rheumatologist.

EVALUATE YOUR CURRENT ACTIVITY

Thinking about the past month, on a 5-point scale (1 is easy to 5 impossible), please indicate your ability in relation to each of the following 'everyday' activities.¹

Evaluating your current activity	1	2	3	4	5
Putting on socks or tights without help or aids (e.g., sock aid).					
Bending from the waist to pick up an item from the floor without aid.					
Reaching a high shelf without help or aids (e.g., helping hand).					
Getting up from an armless chair without your hands or any other help.					
Getting up off the floor (without help) from lying on your back.					
Standing unsupported for 10 minutes without discomfort.					
Getting out of bed (without help) from any position.					
Climbing 12-15 steps without using a handrail or walking aid.					
Looking over your shoulder without turning your body.					
Doing physically demanding activities (e.g., physiotherapy exercises, gardening or sports).					
Doing a full day's activities at home or at work.					

In addition to impacting everyday activities, tell your rheumatologist if you are experiencing any of the following challenges. Select any and all that apply:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Fatigue | Pain during sex | Avoiding socialising |
| Poor quality sleep | Joint pain | Avoiding activities I used to enjoy |
| Bowel problems e.g., constipation | Reduced ability to work or study | Poor mental health e.g., anxiety or depression |
| Eye pain or discomfort | Reduced independence | |
| Blurred vision or light sensitivity | Relationship problems | |

Seek the advice of your healthcare team if you are experiencing any of the above symptoms, as some may lead to long-term implications for your health.

HOW ARE YOUR AS SYMPTOMS AFFECTING YOU?²

Thinking about the past 1-2 months, how would you describe the:

Overall level of fatigue/tiredness you have experienced?

NONE

VERY SEVERE

Overall level of AS neck, back or hip pain you have had?

NONE

VERY SEVERE

Overall level of pain/swelling in joints other than neck, back, hips you have had?

NONE

VERY SEVERE

Overall level of discomfort you have had from any areas tender to touch or pressure?

NONE

VERY SEVERE

Overall level of morning stiffness you have had from the time you wake up

NONE

VERY SEVERE

Average duration of morning stiffness from the time you wake up?

0 HRS

2+ HRS

½

1

1½

MANAGING YOUR AS

Overall, do you feel that your current management plan is controlling your AS to the level that you would like?

Yes

No

It's important to speak to your rheumatologist about whether your current treatment is managing your symptoms well and ensure they factor in your preferred administration route (e.g., oral vs injection and daily vs monthly), work and other life commitments, and personal goals such as socialising, leisure, and other activities. A healthcare practitioner should decide on the appropriate treatment in consultation with the patient.

My preferred treatment administration method (both prescription and over-the-counter medicines) is:

Oral tablet

Topical cream

Other

Oral liquid

Injection

Remember to consider other forms of therapy outside of prescription and over-the-counter medicines to help manage your AS e.g. physiotherapy, counselling, acupuncture, exercise, and tell your rheumatologist if you are using other substances e.g., alcohol.

**DON'T
SETTLE**
for OK

**SPEAK TO YOUR RHEUMATOLOGIST
AND DISCOVER HOW TO BETTER MANAGE
YOUR ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS.**

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AU-IMMR-230004. March 2023.

References: 1. Calin A et al. J Rheumatol. 1994 Dec;21(12):2281-5. 2. Garret S et al. J Rheumatol. 1994 Dec;21(12):2286-91.