

Appointment Prep Guide

You live with lupus every day, but you probably see your rheumatologist only once every 3 months or so. With most appointments lasting less than 15 minutes, it's important to make the most of the valuable time you spend with your doctor.

The steps that follow are designed to help you have the power to face your lupus. **Check each one off** as you prepare for your next appointment and you'll be ready to make your time together productive.

❑ **Step 1: Take note of all your symptoms.** Use the **Lupus Checklist** before your appointment to record all your symptoms, even the ones that may not feel like lupus. If you have an Android™ smartphone, you may want to download our free app, **My Lupus Log**. It can help you monitor and track your symptoms. Simply go to the Google Play™ Store and search "My Lupus Log."

❑ **Step 2: Document how lupus is affecting your life.** The **Lupus Impact Tracker™** can be especially helpful in understanding how lupus may be interfering with your day-to-day life. Complete the tracker now, and then plan to complete another one every 4 weeks, so you can begin to see how lupus is affecting you over time.

❑ **Step 3: Get ready.** One of the most important things to remember is to get ready well ahead of time. How exactly should you do that? Start by finding the date of your next appointment on your calendar. Then, find the date that is **3 weeks before your appointment**. Circle that date as your get-ready starting point.

❑ **Step 4: Choose your appointment buddy.** Take a trusted friend or family member to help you with important tasks during your appointment so you can be free to talk to your doctor. Ask them to serve as your **advocate, extra pair of eyes and ears, and note-taker**.

No matter what you need from your buddy, make sure you are clear about it. Your doctor will want you to do most of the talking. But it's okay to ask your advocate to "butt in" if you're having trouble expressing yourself.

❑ **Step 5: Gather your medical records.** If you've been to another doctor or specialist **since your last visit** to this doctor, find copies of any appointment notes you may have received at checkout. If you've had any visits to an emergency room or urgent care center since your last visit, be sure to take copies of those records, as well.

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Step 6: Be ready to answer the most common physician questions. Write down your answers and practice them so that you are direct and to the point. And remember to be honest. Some topics can be hard to talk about, but your doctor can't help if they don't know what's going on. Your doctor is likely to ask you:

- How have you been feeling physically?
- How have you been feeling emotionally?
- Anything significant in your life I should know about?
- Any new problems I should be aware of?
(It's okay if you're not sure if these are lupus-related.)

Step 7: List your questions and concerns. Think hard about all that you want to discuss with your doctor. Then, write it out, keep it brief and clear, and don't save it until the doctor is walking out the door. Since sometimes describing your lupus can be hard, it will help if you rehearse it in front of the mirror or, even better, with a trusted friend.

You've done all the hard work and now you're ready for your appointment!

Don't forget to:

take your completed tools and records,

take all your current medications (including vitamins and supplements),

call your buddy, and

relax, knowing you'll have a more productive time with your doctor.

Visit usinlupus.com/Tools to download additional copies of this and other lupus-related tools.

GSK is committed to the well-being, education, and support of people living with lupus.

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