

QUESTION: How can I make each visit with my doctor as productive as possible?

Tammy Utset, MD: I think to make your visits with your doctor as productive as possible it's helpful to make lists on the issues you want to be sure to address with your doctor. So always the most frustrating situation to your doctor is when you have a nice, long visit covering all your lupus issues and as you're walking out the door you say, "Oh, yes, Doctor, I forgot to mention I've been having crushing substernal chest pain for the last 10 days." And so you need to be sure you have all of the important problems to be addressed during the visit, so it can be addressed and be prioritized during, in the appropriate way.

So lists are good on what you want to address, but also on just what you think might be important symptoms, because lupus is funny, because it can do so many different things that the patients may not quite be sure what are important symptoms. So lists of...symptoms just to run by the doctor. "I had a funny headache and I couldn't see out of my eye very well for about a minute, but then it went away and I haven't had it again." So was there something neurologic going on? Does there need to have some neurologic tests...So I'd want to know, even though the symptoms lasted one minute, it didn't happen again, I want to know about funny symptoms.

And sort of an inventory of how well their symptoms have been doing since I've last seen them. I always know which of my patients are schoolteachers because they have very neat little journals of all their symptoms with a rating of how each of their symptoms have been doing since I last saw them, and they're my very orderly patients...I know exactly how they've been doing in the last three months. So that's fine with me. So keeping records so that you can really fill in your doctor on how you're doing is a good thing.

This video is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice that is right for you and your medical condition.