

Building Stronger Conversations:

How to Talk About Rheumatoid Arthritis Care

Living with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) means making ongoing treatment decisions that can significantly impact quality of life. The best outcomes happen when patients and providers make **shared decisions** – but starting and maintaining these conversations is not always easy. Clear communication empowers patients to take an active role in care and pursue remission.



Be Open

Opening up helps providers better understand a patient's condition and priorities. From the first appointment, creating a dialogue lays the foundation for trust. Begin with a general concern, then follow up with a specific question.

Ask: "Can you explain the different options and how we'll decide what's best for me?"

Ask: "I'm worried about how RA will affect my work. Will I still be able to do my job?"

Learn About Treatment Options

Knowledge is essential for informed decision-making. RA medicines may be oral, injected or infused. Patients who understand treatment options are better equipped to partner in care.

Keep the Dialogue Going

Clinicians can best assist if they are up-to-date on the condition's progression. Bring a trusted family member or friend for support if needed. If treatment is not working well enough, patients should share that.

Say: "I want to be intimate with my spouse, but pain makes it difficult"

Say: "The morning stiffness hasn't improved, and some days my pain is worse"

Be Honest About All Symptoms

Doctors hear these concerns from many patients. Specific, personal input guides care. No symptom is too small to mention – from pain to intimacy concerns.

Confirm What You Heard

Patients should take the time to clarify with their provider. Summarizing what the clinician said helps ensure there is no misunderstanding.

Say: "So, what I hear you saying is..."

Every detail helps care teams make the best decisions for each individual patient. An open, honest dialogue supports informed choices and is essential in the pursuit of remission and a full life with rheumatoid arthritis.



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