

Navigating appointments

With limited time in appointments, it's important to prepare for them to get the most out of them. Remember, medical appointments should be a two-way conversation with your healthcare professional. It's an opportunity to make decisions together to manage your axial SpA and the impact it has on your life.

How should I use these resource sheets?

Use the first sheet to prepare for an appointment. Take your time completing it, as thinking things through in advance can help you get the most out of your appointment.

Some things to remember:

- Have you completed any forms or questionnaires sent by your healthcare team?
- To help describe your symptoms, refer back to the pain scale in the symptom diary toolkit
- You're welcome to take a friend or family member with you to your appointment

Use the next resource sheet to keep a note of your priorities for the appointment, so you cover what you need. You can also take essential notes during the appointment, but your healthcare professional should send a summary of the appointment to you afterwards.

If you need to take time reflecting after an appointment, use the third sheet to help you do this.

It's helpful to reflect back on completed sheets to help you prepare for future appointments.

Preparing for an appointment - 1

Date and time
Name and title of healthcare professional (s)
List of current medication
How has your axial SpA been since your last appointment?
What's been going well? Any positive changes?
Any changes to your general health since your last appointment? (Scans, blood tests, operations, other symptoms?)

Preparing for an appointment - 2

What have you been doing to manage your symptoms?

How have your axial SpA flares been? (How often, how severe, improving/worsening, any triggers?)

Anything to consider? (E.g. planning to start a family, life changes coming up...)

If you could change one thing about your axial SpA today, what would it be?

Do you have any questions you would like to ask in your appointment?

Using your responses in the spaces above, what are your top 2-3 priorities for today's appointment? Put these into the 'during the appointment' worksheet

During an appointment -1

What are you hoping to get out of the appointment?

List your top 2-3 priorities to discuss in the appointment (share these with your healthcare professional at the beginning of the appointment)

Use this space to take notes during the appointment

During an appointment -2

What are the next steps for your management or treatment?

What things can you do between appointments to manage your condition/symptoms?

How long until your next appointment? Will it be face-to-face, virtual, or telephone?

Appointment reflection

Feel free to make general notes/reflections here

How do you feel the appointment went?

Is there anything you didn't cover that you wanted to?

Is there anything you'd like to discuss at your next appointment?

Are there other healthcare professionals it would be helpful to see? (E.g. physiotherapist, nurse, occupational therapist, talking therapies...)