

# DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE: DERMATOMYOSITIS (DM)

If you have DM, it's important that you talk openly with your doctor. Tell him or her about how you're feeling, ask any questions you may have, and discuss what you hope to gain from treatment. The topics offered here may help you to make the most of doctor visits.

## TO PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT



### GET YOUR RECORDS

If you're seeing a new doctor, contact your former doctor well in advance. This way he or she can share your past test results and other medical information.



### IDENTIFY YOURSELF

Remember to take all your insurance information and ID cards with you.



### DON'T DO IT ALONE

If you have a care partner, have him or her join you. Your care partner can help you prepare, and remember (or write down) information your doctor gives you.



### ARRIVE EARLY

It's important to take advantage of all the time you have with the doctor. Especially if it's your first time meeting a new doctor.

## DISCUSS WHAT YOU KNOW

Tell your doctor about any **family history of DM or its symptoms**. If you already have a diagnosis, let him or her know if new symptoms have arisen. It's also important to inform your doctor if current symptoms have gotten worse.

**Let your doctor know how your muscles and skin feel.** And be sure to mention anything about your exercise routine. Also, tell him or her how you are handling everyday tasks (with or without assistance), such as:

- Household chores
- Trips up and down stairs
- Gardening
- Grocery shopping



### Complete the Health Assessment Questionnaire on the next page.

Take it to your appointment and share it with your doctor. It can help him or her further understand how you're doing.

## HEALTH ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Rate your ability to perform the activities listed below. Share this with your doctor. It may help you to track any changes in your condition and discuss them during your next appointment.

Are you able to: (without assistance)	Without Any Difficulty	With Some Difficulty	With Much Difficulty	Unable to Do
1. Dress yourself (includes shoelaces and buttons)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Shampoo your hair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Stand up from a chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Get in and out of bed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Cook/prepare a meal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Cut meat/food when eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Chew and swallow your food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Lift a full cup/glass to your mouth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Open a new milk carton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Walk outdoors on flat ground	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Climb up 5 steps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Get in/out of tub or shower	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Wash/dry your body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Get on/off the toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Reach for and lift a 5-lb object over your head	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Bend down to pick up clothing from the floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Turn faucets on/off	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Open car doors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Get in/out of car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Run errands/shop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Vacuum or do yard work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## DISCUSS YOUR TEST RESULTS

Be sure you understand what your different test results reveal—and mean.

- Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)
- Blood tests
- Electromyography (EMG)
- Muscle biopsy
- Skin biopsy

## FIND OUT WHAT OPTIONS YOU HAVE

The questions below are a good way to begin a discussion with your doctor. Take them to your appointment. You needn't ask all of the questions listed. Pick and choose the questions that you feel are most important to you.

- What can I expect now that I have been diagnosed with dermatomyositis?
- Are there any other healthcare providers I should meet with?
- Can my symptoms change or worsen?
- What are my treatment options?
- What are the benefits and risks of each treatment option?
- How can I manage dermatomyositis along with my other medical condition(s)?
- Do I need to avoid sun exposure?
- Can you recommend a specific sunscreen that I should use when outside?
- Are there exercise options I should consider?
- Could I benefit from physical therapy? If so, can you refer me to a physical therapist who has worked with people with my condition?
- Should I consider changes to my diet?
- Are there any vitamins or supplements I should add to my treatment?
- Are there any modifications (changes) I should make at home?
- Do you have any printed information I can take home with me to read?
- Can you recommend any books that I might find helpful?
- Can you recommend any websites or online support groups that I might find useful? Anything on social media?
- What can I do to make things easier on my spouse/care partner?

## IF SOMETHING'S ON YOUR MIND, ASK

If you have questions or concerns beyond what is provided here, write them in the space below and take them with you to your appointment:

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## TAKE NOTES DURING THE APPOINTMENT

Take a pen to your doctor visit. Use this area to record anything you learn.

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