

*Maybe
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**The
Little Guide
to Good
Questions**

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The initial shock of being diagnosed with arthritis or psoriasis can be difficult. It can even feel like you've been robbed of a future, planned or unplanned. Questions can start to build up and the experience may begin to feel a bit overwhelming. You're not alone in feeling like this – many people in your position experience the exact same emotions. It can be hard to know what you should ask your doctor during your next appointment. And that's OK – with a little time, support, and information, you'll feel like your old self again. This guide is here to help you begin to ask the right questions and get the answers you need.

Your Specialist Team are there to help you through every part of your journey. To give you the best advice they can, your Specialist Team needs to know and understand you – what your unique, individual needs are and your hopes and ambitions for the future.

In this guide you'll find a number of questions to ask your doctor or nurse that will help create the best treatment plan for you.

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The Good Questions

Your condition

- 1 How long will I need to take my medication?
- 2 Do I need to change my diet and exercise routine?

Your relationships and future

- 3 Will my relationships be affected?
- 4 Can I be a mum?

Your life

- 5 Will I be able to work?
- 6 Will I be able to travel?
- 7 Can I still live the life I want to live?

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① How long will I need to take my medication?

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Once you have an understanding about your condition, a good question to ask your doctor is what the general plan around your medication will be. Make sure you're also in the know when it comes to side effects to look for, as well as the things that you can and can't do on your medication. For example, if you are thinking about starting a family, what are the choices about taking medication while pregnant? Asking this question opens up a conversation with your doctor where, together, you can make informed decisions about your medication plan.

② Do I need to change my diet and exercise routine?

Whether it's maintaining a healthy weight, enjoying a balanced diet, performing certain exercises, or participating in different sporting activities, you should always get advice from your Specialist Team. They can help you identify whether or not it might help you to make any changes to your eating habits or exercise routine.

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③ Will my relationships be affected?

Your doctor or nurse won't be able to tell who's a great match for you, but they are there to support you in all aspects of your life with arthritis or psoriasis – including the impact they might have on your relationships. If you're worried about your medication affecting your intimate relationships, explain these concerns to your doctor or nurse – they're there to help you and no topic is taboo.

You might also find it useful to check out the resources and support on this topic on the Arthur's Place website:

www.arthursplace.co.uk

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④ Can I be a mum?

Becoming a mum might seem so far in your future, that you may be reluctant to ask about it. But, it's a good idea to open the conversation early no matter how far away starting a family may be. This is because it might influence the medication your doctor advises, as some should not be used during pregnancy. And when you're ready to start a family, it's important you've had time to explore and settle on suitable treatment options. This way, you are less likely to be affected by a flare-up caused by changing your treatment.

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5 Will I be able to work?

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Most people aspire to have a fulfilling career, working in a field they're passionate about and doing the best work they can. Being diagnosed with arthritis or psoriasis doesn't limit your ability to work or make your own way in the world. You may find it helps to talk with your employer and make them aware of your diagnosis so they can provide appropriate support. Arthur's Place has some great articles from people living with arthritis on their experiences of the working world – have a look at them at www.arthursplace.co.uk.

⑥ Will I be able to travel?

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Visiting and exploring new and exciting places is a wonderful thing to do – and your treatment shouldn't stop that. However, you should talk through travel plans with your doctor or nurse. Make sure you ask if there could be any interactions between your medication and your immunisations, how long your medication will last, if you need to keep your medication in certain conditions and what climates may have an impact on your illness (to avoid anything getting in the way of your fun!).

7 Can I still live the life I want to live?

This is what many people want to know. You've been through a lot, but there is still a bright future for you, brimming with potential! A diagnosis of arthritis or psoriasis can create unneeded worry – but your Specialist Team are there to support and help you to live the life you want to live. Whether it's education, your career, travel, or starting a family, the best thing to do is **ask**.

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Think #MaybeBaby

To support young women with arthritis or psoriasis, Arthur's Place is hosting our campaign called #MaybeBaby

www.arthursplace.co.uk/maybebaby

#MaybeBaby is for all women who have been diagnosed with arthritis or psoriasis and has useful information and resources to help.

There are videos and other support materials available on our webpage, and on the broader Arthur's Place website - explore both and join the supportive community built by people just like you

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