

Systemic Sclerosis (SSc) Symptom & Flare Checklist

Use this checklist to track symptoms, possible triggers, medications, and when to contact your rheumatologist.

✓ Symptoms (check all that apply)

- Tightening or thickening of the skin
- Puffy or swollen fingers
- Fingers turning white, blue, or purple in cold or stress
- Finger pain, numbness, or tingling
- Fingertip sores or ulcers
- Joint pain or stiffness
- Muscle aches or weakness
- Hand swelling or reduced hand movement
- Trouble swallowing
- Heartburn or acid reflux
- Bloating, constipation, or diarrhea
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulty
- Dry cough
- Chest tightness
- Fatigue or reduced endurance
- Skin itching or discomfort
- Calcium deposits / hard lumps under skin
- Mouth tightening or smaller mouth opening
- Hoarseness or voice changes
- Fever or feeling generally unwell
- Other: _____

✓ Possible Triggers (past 24–72 hours)

- Missed doses of SSc medication
- Recent infection (cold, flu, skin infection, dental infection)
- High stress / poor sleep
- Cold exposure

- Increased sun exposure
- Recent medication change or dose change
- Overexertion / heavy activity
- Smoking / vaping exposure
- Alcohol intake
- Worsening reflux due to food triggers
- Other: _____

✓ Current Medications

Medications taken for symptoms (today/this flare):

Dose and time taken:

Long-term SSc medication(s) (if any):

Last dose taken (date/time):

When to Call Your Rheumatologist (or seek urgent care)

- Rapid worsening of skin tightening or swelling
- New or worsening fingertip sores, ulcers, or severe finger pain
- Trouble swallowing food, liquids, or pills
- Shortness of breath, chest tightness, or worsening breathing
- Severe reflux, vomiting, or inability to keep food down
- New or worsening swelling in hands, legs, or around the eyes
- Fever with major worsening symptoms or concern for infection
- Side effects from medications (rash, shortness of breath, severe GI symptoms)
- New severe joint pain, weakness, or major decline in function
- Flares becoming more frequent, more severe, or affecting daily function
- Questions about medication safety, pregnancy planning, infections, or vaccines

Contact Information

Rheumatology Care Associates

Phone: [Call \(352\) 717-0603](tel:3527170603)

Contact / Request Appointment: [Contact Us](#)

Address: 2611 S US Hwy 27, Clermont, FL 34711

Website: rheumatologycareassociates.com

Book Appointment: [Schedule Online](#)

Quick Action Plan

During a symptom flare:

1. Take your prescribed symptom-relief medication exactly as directed by your clinician.
2. Keep warm and protect your hands from cold exposure, especially if Raynaud-type symptoms are worse.
3. Rest when fatigue, pain, or breathing symptoms increase, but avoid unsafe overexertion.
4. Keep track of skin tightening, finger color changes, ulcers, swallowing issues, reflux, and breathing symptoms.
5. Stay hydrated and follow reflux-friendly eating habits if swallowing or heartburn symptoms are worse.
6. Avoid smoking and triggers that worsen circulation, reflux, or breathing.
7. Contact your rheumatologist promptly if skin, fingertip, swallowing, GI, or breathing symptoms worsen.
8. Seek urgent care for severe shortness of breath, inability to swallow safely, severe chest symptoms, or rapidly worsening ulcers.

Prevention tips:

- Take long-term SSc medication consistently as prescribed.
- Keep a simple flare log (date, skin symptoms, hand symptoms, swallowing issues, breathing symptoms, possible triggers).
- Protect yourself from cold exposure and support circulation.
- Pace physical activity and avoid overexertion during active flares.
- Report new ulcers, breathing changes, swallowing problems, or severe reflux early.
- Keep regular follow-ups and review medication side effects with your specialist.

Need Help?

Emergency / urgent concerns:

Call now: [\(352\) 717-0603](tel:3527170603)

Request appointment: [Contact Form](#)

Visit website:

rheumatologycareassociates.com

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For educational purposes only. This does not replace professional medical advice. Always consult your healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment.

Learn more about Systemic Sclerosis: [Visit our SSc Guide](#)

How to Use This Checklist

1. Print this checklist or keep it on your phone.
2. During a flare, check symptoms and possible triggers.
3. Record medications and timing to help monitor treatment response.
4. Bring it to appointments so your rheumatologist can track patterns over time.
5. Call immediately for trouble swallowing, breathing difficulty, severe fingertip ulcers, or rapidly worsening symptoms.