

# Polymyositis (PM) Symptom & Flare Checklist

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

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## ✓ Symptoms (check all that apply)

- Muscle weakness in shoulders, hips, thighs, or neck
  - Trouble climbing stairs
  - Trouble rising from a chair or bed
  - Difficulty lifting arms overhead
  - Trouble carrying groceries or daily objects
  - Muscle aches, soreness, or tenderness
  - Fatigue or reduced endurance
  - Difficulty swallowing
  - Choking or coughing with food or liquids
  - Voice changes or weak voice
  - Shortness of breath or breathing difficulty
  - Chest wall weakness or feeling unable to take a deep breath
  - Joint pain or stiffness
  - Fever
  - Weight loss or low appetite
  - Muscle wasting / shrinking
  - Trouble turning in bed or holding your head up
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
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## ✓ Possible Triggers (past 24–72 hours)

- Missed doses of PM medication
- Recent infection (cold, flu, skin infection, dental infection)
- High stress / poor sleep
- Overexertion / heavy activity
- New medication or dose change
- Recent steroid dose reduction
- Smoking / vaping exposure

- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
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## ✓ Current Medications

**Medications taken for symptoms (today/this flare):**

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**Dose and time taken:**

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**Long-term PM medication(s) (if any):**

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**Last dose taken (date/time):**

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## When to Call Your Rheumatologist (or seek urgent care)

- Muscle weakness rapidly worsening over days
  - Trouble swallowing food, liquids, or pills
  - Choking episodes or concern food/liquid is “going down the wrong way”
  - Shortness of breath, chest tightness, or worsening breathing
  - Unable to stand, walk safely, or lift arms due to weakness
  - New hoarseness or major voice change
  - Fever with major worsening symptoms or concern for infection
  - Side effects from medications (rash, shortness of breath, severe GI symptoms)
  - Symptoms becoming more frequent, more severe, or limiting daily function significantly
  - Questions about medication safety, pregnancy planning, infections, or vaccines
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## 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](http://rheumatologycareassociates.com)

**Book Appointment:** [Schedule Online](#)

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# Quick Action Plan

## During a symptom flare:

1. Take your prescribed medication exactly as directed by your clinician.
2. Reduce unsafe physical strain and pace activity carefully.
3. Avoid activities that increase fall risk if your hips or thighs feel weak.
4. Pay close attention to swallowing, choking, coughing, or breathing changes.
5. Stay hydrated and choose easier-to-swallow foods if swallowing is affected.
6. Track which muscle groups feel weaker and whether daily tasks are becoming harder.
7. Contact your rheumatologist promptly if weakness, swallowing trouble, or breathing symptoms worsen.
8. Seek urgent care for severe swallowing problems, choking, or shortness of breath.

## Prevention tips:

- Take long-term PM medication consistently as prescribed.
  - Keep a simple flare log (date, weakness level, affected muscles, swallowing symptoms, possible triggers).
  - Pace activity and avoid overexertion during active symptoms.
  - Report new breathing, swallowing, or voice symptoms early.
  - Keep regular follow-ups and lab monitoring as advised.
  - Review medication side effects and infection precautions with your clinician.
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## Need Help?

### Emergency / urgent concerns:

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

### Request appointment:

[Contact Form](#)

### Visit website:

[rheumatologycareassociates.com](http://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.*

## 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 changes in weakness and response.
4. Bring it to appointments so your rheumatologist can track progression and treatment response.
5. Call immediately for trouble swallowing, choking, worsening breathing, or rapidly increasing weakness.