

Dermatomyositis (DM) Symptom & Flare Checklist

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

✓ 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
 - Muscle aches, soreness, or tenderness
 - Extreme fatigue or reduced endurance
 - Purple or dusky rash on eyelids (heliotrope rash)
 - Rash on knuckles, elbows, knees, chest, or back
 - Itchy, painful, rough, or scaly rash
 - Swelling or redness around the eyes
 - Nailfold changes, ragged cuticles, or visible blood vessels near nails
 - Gottron-like bumps or patches on hands/knuckles
 - Joint pain or joint swelling
 - Trouble swallowing
 - Voice changes or weak voice
 - Shortness of breath or breathing difficulty
 - Calcium deposits / hard lumps under skin
 - Scalp rash or scalp tenderness
 - Fever or feeling generally unwell
 - Other: _____
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✓ Possible Triggers (past 24–72 hours)

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

- Increased sun exposure
 - Recent medication change or dose change
 - Overexertion / heavy activity
 - Smoking / vaping exposure
 - Alcohol intake
 - Other: _____
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✓ Current Medications

Medications taken for symptoms (today/this flare):

Dose and time taken:

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

Last dose taken (date/time):

When to Call Your Rheumatologist (or seek urgent care)

- Muscle weakness rapidly worsening over days
 - Trouble swallowing food, liquids, or pills
 - Shortness of breath, chest tightness, or worsening breathing
 - Unable to stand up, walk safely, or lift arms due to weakness
 - New or worsening rash with severe pain, ulceration, or spreading redness
 - Fever with major worsening symptoms or concern for infection
 - Significant swelling around eyes or severe skin flare
 - Side effects from medications (rash, shortness of breath, severe GI symptoms)
 - New severe joint swelling or pain
 - Flares becoming more frequent, more severe, or affecting daily function
 - 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

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. Rest when weakness is worse, but avoid unsafe overexertion.
3. Protect your skin from sun exposure with clothing and sunscreen.
4. Keep track of rash changes, muscle weakness, swallowing issues, and breathing symptoms.
5. Stay hydrated and prioritize sleep and recovery.
6. Avoid activities that increase fall risk if your legs or hips feel weak.
7. Contact your rheumatologist promptly if weakness, rash, swallowing, or breathing symptoms worsen.
8. Seek urgent care for severe swallowing trouble, breathing difficulty, or sudden major weakness.

Prevention tips:

- Take long-term DM medication consistently as prescribed.
 - Keep a simple flare log (date, rash areas, weakness level, swallowing symptoms, possible triggers).
 - Limit sun exposure and use daily sun protection.
 - Pace physical activity and avoid overexertion during active flares.
 - Report new skin findings, breathing symptoms, or swallowing changes early.
 - Keep regular follow-ups and review medication side effects with your specialist.
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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 Dermatomyositis: [Visit our DM 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, shortness of breath, rapidly worsening weakness, or severe spreading rash.