To someone living with rheumatic disease, even the smallest tasks can seem gargantuan.

ACR Member Toolkit

simple tasks™
A Public Awareness Campaign from the American College of Rheumatology
Introduction

The American College of Rheumatology’s Simple Tasks™ campaign aims to educate rheumatology patients about policy issues impacting their care and to encourage patients to advocate for healthcare policies that promote safe, effective, affordable and accessible rheumatology care.

To reach patients and policymakers with our Simple Tasks campaign message, the ACR has developed a number of communications tools for our members. The following toolkit includes talking points, a patient advocacy flyer, digital posters, and more to help you effectively educate your patients and community about the early warning signs of rheumatic diseases, the importance of seeking treatment in the “window of opportunity,” the central role of rheumatologists in providing care, and the current health policy issues affecting patients.

We encourage ACR members to utilize all the materials in this toolkit to conduct outreach in your communities and to start the advocacy conversation with your patients. You are also invited to send feedback or questions about the campaign to pr@rheumatology.org. The Simple Tasks effort will extend over the next several years, and input from our members will be helpful guidance for the future.
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Promoting the *Simple Tasks* Campaign

**TALKING POINTS FOR PHYSICIANS**

**Physicians:** Use the following talking points to introduce the *Simple Tasks* Campaign

- If you’re interested, I’d like to introduce you to the *Simple Tasks* campaign and provide you with more information on how you can help advocate for rheumatology patients.

- *Simple Tasks* is a campaign organized by the American College of Rheumatology to educate lawmakers, administration officials, think tanks, advocacy groups, physicians and physician groups on the importance of rheumatology.

- *Simple Tasks* also aims to increase the understanding of the work of rheumatologists and lay a foundation of awareness that creates support for policies that make your healthcare more safe, effective, affordable and accessible.

- Right now, many of the influential people who craft legislation around healthcare issues are not equipped with enough information about rheumatic diseases and rheumatology care to make decisions that positively impact the rheumatology patient community.

- That’s why the patient’s voice in advocacy is incredibly important.

- By connecting with *Simple Tasks*, you can stay informed about the latest policy changes, find resources for patients created by rheumatologists, get involved in advocacy by contacting your lawmakers, and share your story about living with a rheumatic disease.

- You can learn more about *Simple Tasks* by visiting the website at [www.SimpleTasks.org](http://www.SimpleTasks.org).
Physicians: Provide this flyer to patients and encourage them to become a patient advocate. The Simple Tasks website provides an easy-to-use, step-by-step system for patients to send advocacy emails and letters. Patients can learn more at SimpleTasks.org/advocacy.

Please note, we also encourage you and your staff to engage in advocacy as well and send letters through the ACR legislative Action Center at Rheumatology.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Action-Center!
Posters

Arthritis Does That?

Arthritis is an umbrella term used to describe over 100 diseases and conditions, including inflammatory rheumatic diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, gout, and lupus. When considering the severity of these diseases, it becomes clear that they are much more than achy and pants. Rheumatic diseases—whether lumped under the term “arthritis” or not—can be painful, debilitating, and life-threatening.

- Depression, anxiety, memory loss
- Eye irritation and inflammation
- Increased risk of skin diseases and pulmonary fibrosis
- Kidney failure
- Skin hardening, protein
- Miscarriages and stillbirths can cause erectile dysfunction in men
- Arthritis

Learn more about the physical, emotional, and economic impact of arthritis on simpletasks.org

Download Now

The simplest tasks can become impossible because of rheumatic diseases.

Download Now

Download Now

Download Now

Simple tasks™ Toolkit

Download Now

The simplest tasks can become impossible because of rheumatic diseases.
Campaign Overview & Fact Sheet

Simple Tasks

Campaign Overview

Rheumatic diseases can make even the simplest tasks — such as eating, brushing your teeth and driving a car — impossible. The first weeks and months following the onset of rheumatic disease symptoms are known as the “window of opportunity,” and it is crucial that patients get appropriate treatment in that time period to avoid lasting complications.

Appropriate treatment for these complex diseases should be administered by a rheumatologist — the only specialist specifically trained in the diagnosis and treatment of rheumatic diseases. Unlike any other health care provider, rheumatologists are equipped with the tools to detect and treat rheumatic diseases. Rheumatologists’ training and practice enables them to diagnose patients quickly and maximize the “window of opportunity” — dramatically improving a patient’s prognosis.

In September 2011, the American College of Rheumatology launched the Simple Tasks campaign to educate lawmakers, administration officials, think tanks, advocacy groups, physicians and patient groups on the importance of rheumatology, as well as to increase the understanding of the work of rheumatologists and lay a foundation of awareness that creates support for more favorable public policy.

Appropriate and timely referrals, legislation that ensures access to rheumatologists, supporting research and initiatives to grow the workforce, and understanding the importance of the practice of rheumatology are all crucial to ensuring that more people with rheumatic diseases are treated within the “window of opportunity.” However, many of the influential people and groups responsible for making significant decisions about these health care issues are not equipped with enough information about rheumatic diseases and rheumatology to make decisions that positively impact the rheumatology community.

By increasing the visibility of rheumatic diseases and of the specialists who treat them, it’s the ACR’s hope that these influential people and groups will recognize the value of rheumatology, understand the issues affecting this community, and make decisions that support rheumatology and the patients served by the rheumatology health care team.

Join the American College of Rheumatology and over 11 million Americans, in fighting the devastating effects of rheumatic diseases. Visit SimpleTasks.org/JoinNow

Simple Tasks

Campaign Fact Sheet

The Simple Tasks campaign is designed to educate lawmakers, administration officials, think tanks, advocacy groups, physicians and patient groups about the value of rheumatology.

The Diseases

Rheumatic diseases are an enormous and inflammatory diseases that cause the immune system to attack a person’s body tissues, joints and organs. Rheumatic joint diseases often happen without warning; “arthritis” — either to a descriptive term or a diagnosis — can encompass a broad range of diseases. One of the most prevalent rheumatic diseases is the autoimmune disease lupus, which affects women three times more often than men. Rheumatic diseases include the following:

- Arthritis
- Lupus
- Scleroderma
- Polymyositis
- Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
- Systemic lupus erythematosus
- Reactive arthritis
- Fibromyalgia

The Personal Toll

Rheumatic illnesses place a tremendous burden on the individual and family, and society at large. The number of years lost to ill health, disability and premature death attributable to rheumatic diseases is estimated at nearly 120 million. Rheumatic diseases can affect people of all ages and can precipitate a significant strain on public health services and the family. Rheumatic diseases cost society more than $350 billion a year. Rheumatic disease-related work loss costs the U.S. economy more than $50 billion annually.

The Window of Opportunity

The first weeks and months following the onset of rheumatic disease symptoms are known as the “window of opportunity.” It is crucial that patients get appropriate treatment in that time period to avoid lasting complications. Rheumatologists are the only specialists that can diagnose people quickly and take advantage of the “window of opportunity.”

Why a Rheumatologist is the Solution

There are many rheumatologists in the country, and each is specially trained in recognizing and treating rheumatic diseases. By virtue of their training, they are uniquely qualified to detect and treat inflammatory conditions in people of all ages. Rheumatologists can make a difference in people’s lives by diagnosing and treating the disease early, preventing further complications and ensuring a healthy life for people with rheumatic diseases.
Infographic & Badges

Consider posting Simple Tasks infographics and badges on your practice’s website and social media channels.
Social Media Post Templates

Physicians: These suggested post templates are provided to help you communicate about the Simple Tasks campaign through Twitter and Facebook. We encourage you to add this language to your social media pages and customize it for your use.

If you are active on social media, we encourage you to spread the word about — and participate in! — the monthly Simple Tasks Twitter chat. Simple Tasks hosts a lively, monthly #RheumChat focused on ways patients with rheumatic diseases can advocate for their health, and other topics related to rheumatic disease. Each month Simple Tasks hosts #RheumChat with a different guest organization. Join us on the third Thursday of each month at 1PM ET to participate.

Twitter
Rheumatic diseases can make #SimpleTasks impossible. Learn more about early diagnosis & treatment of rheumatic diseases: www.simpletasks.org

Rheumatology patients: Learn how to advocate for policies that promote safe, effective and affordable care: simpletasks.org

Patients: Learn about policy issues that impact your care & find out how you can become an advocate: simpletasks.org

#Act4Arthritis

Learn more about living with rheumatic disease by joining @ACRSimpleTasks’s #RheumChat on the 3rd Thurs each month at 1:00 PM ET.

Facebook
The ACR Simple Tasks campaign raises awareness about the importance of early detection and treatment of rheumatic diseases. Find your window of opportunity at SimpleTasks.org #SimpleTasks

Rheumatology patients! You can learn how to advocate for health care policies that promote safe, effective, and affordable rheumatology care: simpletasks.org

Are you looking for resources related to your rheumatic disease? Join the ACR Simple Tasks Twitter chat (#RheumChat) on the third Thursday of each month! Learn more: simpletasks.org
Blog Post/Newsletter Template

Physicians: Coordinate a local newsletter or blog post through your own distribution channels or through partner organizations in your community.

This template is provided to help you communicate about the Simple Tasks campaign. As always, your personal perspective and stories provide additional depth. We encourage you to add to this language to customize it for your use.

SIMPLE TASKS HIGHLIGHTS DEVASTATING IMPACT OF RHEUMATIC DISEASES

Getting out of bed, eating breakfast, getting dressed and driving to work – for most people these are the simple tasks that begin any normal day, but for but for people with a rheumatic disease, such tasks can be difficult, if not impossible. The symptoms of rheumatic disease are more than just aches and pains; these diseases can cause inflammation and damage to the joints and organs of the body, the development of co-existing diseases, disability and even death.

The American College of Rheumatology’s Simple Tasks campaign (www.SimpleTasks.org) aims to raise awareness of the severe impact of rheumatic diseases because the sooner a person is diagnosed and receives proper treatment, the better their chances at a fuller, healthier life. The time between the onset of rheumatic disease and the start of treatment is crucial and is called the window of opportunity. Only a rheumatologist, skilled in treating rheumatic diseases, is able to ensure it is fully realized. Unfortunately, many patients struggle to access and afford the care they need due to specialist shortages, high drug prices, and other healthcare policies that limit patient access to high-quality care.

By educating patients about the healthcare issues affecting rheumatology care, and providing tools that make it easy for patients to become advocates for their care, the Simple Tasks campaign seeks to ensure that people who are affected by these diseases are able to receive the proper medical care they need from rheumatologists.

Simple Tasks encourages all rheumatology patients to advocate in support of healthcare policies that promote safe, effective, affordable and accessible rheumatology care. The “Advocacy” section of the campaign website – SimpleTasks.org – outlines what each individual can do to make a difference and discover their own window of opportunity.

To find out more about Simple Tasks, visit SimpleTasks.org

• Check out the “Advocacy” section to discover your window of opportunity to help
Contact Information

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