

Helping your Child to Get the Care they Need at School

Created in partnership with your healthcare team, a **Symptom Management Plan** can be an effective tool for communicating with school teachers, administrators, front of school staff and sports coaches about your child's symptoms and to help get them the appropriate care. With just a few small changes, the plan can also be shared with grandparents, older siblings and even babysitters who may care for your child.

By helping the important people in your child's life to better understand and be more understanding of their condition, the goal is that your child will have less obstacles to face in participating fully wherever they may be. Below you will find an example of a plan that you can use to support your child with rheumatic disease in school. If you think a plan like this might be helpful for your child and family, here are a few tips to ensure your "Symptom Management Plan" will be a great success for all involved:

- Always be sure to enlist the help of your healthcare team in creating your plan. They will have important insights and may be able to offer additional resources and/or support.
- The information in your plan should be written in simple, non-medical terms so that educators, staff and/or caregivers can easily understand your child's symptoms and refer to it quickly when challenges arise.
- The plan should ideally be given after an initial in-person or virtual meeting where you can provide a more in-depth overview of their child's condition along with any additional information you'd like to share (i.e web links, brochures, etc).
- The plan should identify routine daily supports your child may need to relieve discomfort and care for their condition. The extent of a child's ability to care for themselves should be agreed upon by the parent/guardian, school personnel, health care team and child/youth if appropriate.
- Children with rheumatic conditions don't want to stick out for their condition! Consider including some instructions on how to handle special occasions, such as a school assembly or field trip, so your child won't feel left out.
- With each new school year, your plan should be updated by first having a conversation with your healthcare team about any changes in your child's health and/or treatments. This is also a great time to review any challenges and/or successes you had in using last year's plan. Then, it will be easy to use the same outline and just add (or remove!) any symptoms/strategies as needed.

A special note about school:

When creating your plan, it is important to note that school policies and staffing resources can vary widely. In Canada, there are no blanket policies, whether by country, province or school district, that govern the care of children with rheumatic conditions in schools. Cassie + Friends is committed to advocating for the rights and health of children and youth with rheumatic conditions in school and invites you to join us by sharing your concerns, ideas and successes. Please email info@cassieandfriends.ca with your comments.

EXAMPLE: Symptom Management Plan for Children/Youth with Rheumatic Conditions

To create your own “Plan” based on this template, please go to FILE> MAKE A COPY and fill in the information specific to your child and add/edit suggested courses of action and accommodations. If a symptom does not apply to your child (i.e. Fever), simply delete it. For a list of symptoms and potential accommodations for JIA, please view the [School Challenges + Recommendations for Students with Rheumatic Disease Checklist](#) and adapt the plan accordingly.

[YOUR CHILD’S NAME] Symptom Management Plan for [SCHOOL, COACH, BABYSITTER, ETC]

When [YOUR CHILD’S NAME] reports feeling unwell with symptoms, the following is the suggested course of action. It is based on [HIS/HER/THEIR] experience, ours and past teachers at school.

1. Pain

[YOUR CHILD’S NAME] experiences pain on a near daily basis, usually in their [PART(S) OF BODY]. *Here’s what helps [edit as suits your child and their symptoms]*

- A hot pack (1 or 2 mins. in microwave)
- Sitting and/or lying down for short while
- Being distracted from the pain
- A snack ie. crackers
- Joining class again after the pain is more manageable
- If the pain is getting worse and after trying all of the above for at least [LENGTH OF TIME], [HE/SHE/THEY] can call to speak to a parent.

2. Nausea

[YOUR CHILD'S NAME] often has nausea. *Here's what helps:*

- Please give [SUGGESTED MEDICATION]. It will take approx. 30 mins. to settle the nausea.
- If this doesn't help after 30 mins. to 1 hour, please call a parent.

2. Fever/Temperature Control

[YOUR CHILD'S NAME] often feels very hot, like they have a fever. *Here's what helps:*

- Try to help cool them down with a wet cloth.
- If you suspect a temperature, follow school procedures and/or call [YOUR NAME/
GUARDIAN'S NAME] at [YOUR PHONE NUMBER] and give [SUGGESTED MEDICATION
BASED OFF YOUR EXPERIENCE.]

Please don't hesitate to call myself or _____ at any time to double check [YOUR CHILD'S NAME]'s symptoms and suggested course of action. Thank you!

Contact Phone Number 1:

Contact Phone Number 2: