

# Talking With Your Doctor About Assistive Devices and a Parking Placard

*Discussion points, so you can have the conversation clearly. This is not a medical necessity letter.*

This page is a conversation guide, nothing more. It will not diagnose you, and it is not an official letter of medical necessity. Its only job is to help you walk into the appointment able to describe your needs clearly, because on a hard day the right words are the hardest thing to find. Your doctor makes the clinical decision and completes any official forms. You bring the honest picture of your life.

## How to open the conversation

Lead with function and impact, not just your diagnosis. Something like: "I want to talk about some tools that would help me stay safer and spend less of my limited energy. My connective tissue condition affects my daily life in these specific ways, and I think the right support would help me do more, not less." Then describe what your days actually look like.

## Mobility aids (a cane, a rollator, or a wheelchair, including part-time use)

- Joint instability and falls. Loose or subluxing joints in the hips, knees, ankles, or feet make uneven ground and long distances genuinely unsafe.
- Fatigue and post-exertional crashes. Walking distance spends energy you may pay for days later. An aid conserves it for the actual errand or event.
- Orthostatic symptoms. Dizziness, racing heart, and presyncope while upright and walking can make standing in line or crossing a lot risky.
- Pain with standing or walking. An aid lowers the load and lets you last longer with less cost.
- Part-time and variable use is valid. Your body changes day to day. Needing an aid some days and not others is responsiveness, not inconsistency.

## Braces, supports, and compression

- Joint braces. Steady an unstable joint through a specific task and add proprioceptive feedback so your body senses the joint better.
- Compression garments. Help counter blood pooling in POTS and orthostatic intolerance, easing dizziness and the energy cost of staying upright.

## Home and daily-living aids

- Shower chair or bench, grab bars. Heat and standing can trigger lightheadedness or fainting, and wet surfaces raise the fall risk for unstable joints.
- Reachers, jar openers, and similar. Protect small, easily strained joints and lower the daily energy tax of ordinary tasks.

## A disability parking placard

Criteria vary by state and country, and your physician certifies the application. The most common benchmark is being unable to walk roughly 200 feet without stopping to rest, though many conditions qualify in other ways. Here are reasons people with these conditions often find a placard genuinely helpful, worth raising with your doctor:

- Orthostatic intolerance and POTS. Symptoms tend to worsen the longer you are upright, so a long walk from far parking can bring on presyncope, a racing heart, or coat-hanger pain.
- Fatigue and post-exertional malaise. A shorter walk to the door preserves limited energy for the reason you came, instead of spending it all in the parking lot.
- Joint instability and pain. Less distance means lower fall risk, fewer subluxations, and less pain loaded onto vulnerable joints.
- Heat intolerance. A shorter crossing of a hot lot reduces the dizziness and exhaustion that heat can trigger.

## Phrases that can help you advocate

- “ *It is not about how I look. It is about what this costs my body.* ”
- “ *My condition is variable, so I need this most for the harder days.* ”
- “ *The right support helps me do more of my life, not less.* ”
- “ *I am asking for the tools that keep me functional. For my condition, that is the management.* ”

### One honest boundary.

This page helps you describe your needs and ask good questions. It is not a diagnosis or a letter of medical necessity, and it does not guarantee any device or placard. Your physician weighs your history and signs any official forms. You deserve to be heard while they do.

*You were never asking for too much. You are asking for what lets you live your life. That is exactly what these tools are for.*