

# Caroline's top tips to create a chronic inflammatory disease game plan



Caroline Wozniacki is the highest-ranking female athlete known to have been diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis while still playing professional tennis. Here she outlines her top tips to building a long-term disease game plan.

It's important to take an active role in your disease journey throughout all stages of life. These are just a few areas you should take advantage of...

## 1 Know yourself

It's your body, so your rules. When I was first experiencing symptoms, and when I got my diagnosis, I researched my condition thoroughly. I think it's important to stay informed and have the right tools in place to be your own advocate.

## 2 Talk to your health care team

One of the best things you can do is build a treatment and management plan tailored specifically to your unique needs! We are all so different, and it's crucial to keep in regular contact with your health care provider to make sure your game plan is on track.

More information on chronic inflammatory diseases\*, such as rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis, as well as resources to help make the most of your conversations with a specialist are available at: [AdvantageHers.com](https://www.advantagehers.com)

## 3 Track your symptoms/ triggers/feelings in a diary

I find it helpful to track my rheumatoid arthritis symptoms. It's in my nature to push myself, and sometimes I go too far which can end up in me having a flare; so, it's important to see the direct outcomes of any actions we make. I track all sorts (symptoms and beyond) — including my food, exercise, how stressed I am, if I'm fatigued or in pain and lots more.

## 4 But also make plans for your future

The main reasons for my retirement from tennis were because I wanted to continue my Harvard studies, work closely with women living with chronic inflammatory diseases, to support awareness and research, and to consider building a family. I am so excited about what lies ahead for me.

## 5 Talk to others in a similar position to you

Having the support of, and being able to offer support, to the rheumatoid arthritis community has meant the world to me since my diagnosis. If you are living with a chronic inflammatory disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis or psoriasis, there are so many online forums, support groups and charities that you can get involved with that enable you to cross paths with inspiring people living with similar conditions.

## 6 Always keep friends and family close

My family, friends and husband, David, are my absolute rocks! They've helped me through my worst times and celebrated the best moments with me. There were days where I'd win tennis matches, and days I couldn't physically get out of bed. They didn't always understand what was happening to my body, but stood by me through all of it.



## 7 Be accepting

The words 'Advantage Hers' resonate with me personally, because some days, just like in tennis, I'll have the advantage, but sometimes I won't. That's what living with a condition like rheumatoid arthritis is like. There are mornings where I sometimes feel ready to take on anything; but other days I just need to rest — the key is listening to your body and forgiving yourself if you need to take it easy.

## 8 Advantage Hers — stay informed

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For more information, visit: [AdvantageHers.com](https://www.advantagehers.com)

\*About chronic inflammatory diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis

Chronic inflammation is long-term inflammation — when the immune system recognizes and removes harmful stimuli — lasting anywhere from several months to years.<sup>1</sup> Chronic inflammatory disease is a broad and evolving description for conditions associated with chronic inflammation. UCB focuses the definition of chronic inflammatory diseases on rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis, as these are the disease areas where UCB tries to make a difference in the lives of patients.

References:

1. Pahwa R, Jialal I. Chronic Inflammation. StatPearls Publishing. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK493173/>. Accessed January 2020.