

What is Spondyloarthritis (SpA)?



**1 in every 100
Canadians are
affected**



**Average time to
diagnosis is 7 to 10
years**



**Inflammation of the
spine, eyes, skin
and gastrointestinal
tract**



**Can be controlled
with medications
but there is no cure**



- Spondyloarthritis is a form of inflammatory arthritis. There are 7 types that can be broadly classified as axial or peripheral. The disease causes extreme pain in the low back, hips, and any other affected joints.
- It also has systemic effects including fatigue and widespread pain.
- The onset of SpA is usually in young adulthood.
- The disease is cyclic; occurring in periods of flares and remission.
- Disease progression can lead to irreversible damage such as spinal fusion.
- Due to the usual long time to diagnosis, some may go undiagnosed for years but still suffer from symptoms thus requiring accommodations.

Research shows that accommodations are good for business:

- ✓ Increased employee presenteeism and productivity
- ✓ Retaining valued employees
- ✓ Eliminate the cost of training a new employee
- ✓ Increased overall company morale and productivity
- ✓ Improved interactions with co-workers

Accommodation is the law

The Employment Equity Act aims to “achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability.” The act states that employment equity goes beyond treating people the same way (equality) but also requires special measures and accommodations.

Creating an Accommodation Plan

- Creating this plan should be a collaboration between the employee and the employer and should reflect the individual's needs.
- Accommodations will vary based on the person's needs and may change throughout time.
- The employee's privacy should be respected. If other employees need to be aware it should be done discretely.
- Follow up regularly with the employee and evaluate if there are adjustments to be made.

Possible Accommodations



Flexible Scheduling

This may include setting work hours to correspond to when the employee feels best physically, working part time or working from home as needed.



Modifying Duties

This may include adjusting timelines, re-delegating some tasks to other co-workers or re-arranging tasks according to the employees energy levels.



Modifying the Physical Environment

This may include ergonomic devices such as chairs and standing desks, monitor stands and assistive devices for heavy lifting. An assessment from an occupational therapist may be required.



Policies and Procedures

This may include reimbursement of the treatments prescribed for spondyloarthritis, paid sick days, short and long term disability benefits and access to employee counselling.

Information sourced from the Arthritis Society and Job Accommodation Network



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