

Rheumatology Specialist Nurse Service - telephone advice line

Department of Rheumatology

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Rheumatology specialist nurses are experienced health professionals. They have highly developed skills in caring for patients with all kinds of rheumatology conditions which affect your muscles or joints. These include but are not limited to:

- rheumatoid arthritis (pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints).
- ankylosing spondylitis (affects the spine).
- psoriatic arthritis (also known as psoriatic arthropathy) (a type of arthritis that develops in some people with the skin condition psoriasis - causes affected joints to become swollen).
- systemic lupus erythematosus (causes joint pain, skin rashes and tiredness).

Some specialist nurses are able to diagnose, recommend treatments and prescribe medication.

How can I be referred to a rheumatology specialist nurse?

Your first appointment in the Rheumatology Service will be with a consultant rheumatologist or a member of the medical team for your diagnosis. Depending on your diagnosis, you will then be given an appointment to see the specialist nurse for further management of your condition in the long-term.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

How can a specialist nurse help me?

Your rheumatology specialist nurse will provide follow-up care. This includes assessment of your condition, discussion about treatment plan, and general advice and information.

Contacting our specialist nurse telephone service for advice

Our rheumatology specialist nurses run a telephone advice line for patients who are under the care of the Rheumatology Department, including community hospitals. This will give you access to advice and support by telephone if you are having problems with the treatment or monitoring of your condition.

The advice line telephone number is **0116 258 5264**, and is open Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 11am. Please note that these times may change depending on service demand.

If you are too unwell to call the advice line yourself, a close relative or carer may call on your behalf, with your permission. Relatives/ carers should not call the advice line in any other circumstances, as the nurse will not be able to discuss your care with them.

When should I call the advice line?

You should call the advice line if:

- you have an adverse reaction to any treatment given from the clinic.
- you are having side effects which you feel may be caused by the medication prescribed for your rheumatological condition.
- you have a flare-up of your condition that has not improved with time after using self-help measures. There is a weblink to further information on coping with flare-ups on the next page.
- you have concerns about your symptoms, medication or treatment, which you need to discuss before your next appointment.
- your doctor or nurse has asked you to do so, to report on progress.

What questions might I be asked when calling the advice line?

Please have your hospital number or NHS number to hand. You may be asked the following questions:

- What is your current rheumatology problem?
- When did the problem start?
- What self-help measures have you used to help with the problem?
- What medications are you currently taking?
- Do you have any other illness at present?
- What are your symptoms?
- Have you seen your GP about the current problem?

What happens next?

With this information, the nurse will discuss with you what your best plan of action should be. Sometimes the nurse will be able to give you immediate advice. Sometimes, they will need to see your hospital notes and/or discuss with one of the rheumatology doctors before giving you advice. This can sometimes take a few days, so the nurse may need to call you back.

You may be asked to attend the hospital for a further appointment, or a telephone appointment will be arranged to follow-up.

For what reasons should I not call the advice line?

Please do not call the advice line:

- to change an appointment - please call the booking centre number given on the next page.
- to get test results, unless specifically asked to do so at your last appointment.
- for blood forms - please use the telephone number given on the next page.
- if you need urgent or general medical advice - you should contact your GP, the NHS helpline on 111, or go to the Emergency Department at your local hospital.
- to chase a prescription - please use the telephone number given on the next page.
- for rheumatological medication queries - please call the secretarial team on the number given on the next page or your own GP, depending on who normally prescribes for you.

Further information

Further information can be found by visiting the weblinks below:

- Leicester's Hospitals rheumatology patient information leaflets: www.yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk
- Versus Arthritis UK: www.versusarthritis.org/ / Tel: 0800 5200 520
Coping with flare-ups: <https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/your-experiences/hints-and-tips/self-help-hints-and-tips/>
- National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society: www.nras.org.uk / Tel: 08002987650
- NHS website for general advice and guidance: www.nhs.uk
- National Axial Spondyloarthritis Society (NASS): www.nass.co.uk
- Lupus UK / vasculitis and lupus: www.lupusuk.org.uk/what-is-lupus/
- Royal Osteoporosis Society: www.theros.org.uk

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns you can call us on the following numbers:

- For appointments: call the booking centre on 0300 303 1563
- For blood forms: 0116 258 6029 / 0116 258 5798
- For prescription queries: 0116 258 5798 / 0116 258 6029
- For consultant secretaries: 0116 204 7800 / 0116 258 6473 / 0116 258 5853
- For the Rheumatology Specialist Nurse telephone advice line: 0116 258 5264

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk