

Rheumatology - Infusion of Therapeutic Substance

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NHS ability to provide routine elective services. We recognise that patients are waiting longer than we would all like and it is not always possible to identify when treatment will take place. This document provides you with information on how you are able to support yourself while waiting to attend the hospital. The guidance has been written by clinicians who are responsible for your care.

When you are waiting for further treatment it can sometimes feel like a long wait. The information and advice here is aimed at helping you manage that wait so you arrive for your appointment in the best possible physical and mental health.

The NHS has limited resources which means that we are unable to treat you as quickly as we would like. Each healthcare provider has to consider the type of help you need, how quickly you need treatment, the best course of action to help you and when and where you can be seen.

The process of sorting patients based on their individual needs is called prioritisation. The system of prioritisation is applied consistently across the NHS to help us to decide the order in which patients receive their treatment. This is essential to ensure that we provide care based on need. The system means that care is delivered in the fairest way possible.

Once a referral has been made from primary care to secondary care, the specialist team conduct assessments and then agree with you on the right course of action. At this stage, the urgency will be assessed. If you have a long-term health condition, for example, you may need treatment faster than someone without.

Guidance for Patients

There are several ways to improve your health while awaiting an appointment. These include

1. Avoidance of specific movements that cause pain
2. Increasing physical activity
3. Maintaining good posture
4. Relaxation techniques
5. Heat/ice pack application

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

6. Good quality sleep.

Infusions advised by the physician will be helpful in controlling the disease by reducing inflammation. Before having any infusion, you will be advised necessary screening tests. If you develop any new symptom or have signs of infection such as fever, flu, cough, etc, you need to discuss this with your doctor. He might delay the infusion till the infection settles. Try and avoid public places to keep yourself protected from catching any infection. Monitor any side effect with the infusion and keep your doctor informed. Best is to read the patient information leaflet regarding the drug for better understanding of your treatment.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

The deterioration in your health can be due to multiple reasons. Most importantly, flare of the disease or infection.

Disease flare can be recognized as having increased joint pains, swelling, rash, oral ulcers, or for that matter appearance of symptoms previously settled. This varies from patient to patient depending on the underlying disease. In such a case you need to contact your doctor for further management. He might need to escalate your treatment.

In case you develop symptoms of infection such as fever, cough, burning micturition, etc, you need to stop your disease specific medications temporarily. These can be restarted once the infection settles. In case you are due for an infusion, please consult your doctor as this might need to be delayed till the resolution of infection.

Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit www.nhs.uk. The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999.

Contact Us

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