

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Rheumatology – Infusion of a 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.

The Rheumatology service aims to provide comprehensive and individual care for patients with joint problems, multi-systems inflammatory disorders, bone health such as osteoporosis and a variety of other joint and muscle problems.

Guidance for Patients

Following your initial appointments your physician may advise that an infusion of a therapeutic substance is appropriate. This infusion will be helpful in controlling the disease by reducing inflammation or be infusing a medication to help increase your bone strength.

Before having any infusion, any necessary screening tests will be completed. Should you develop or experience any new symptoms, or have signs of infection such as a fever, flu or cough, you should discuss this with your doctor.

We will write to you with information regarding your appointment, what the intention of the appointment is, where to come and at what time. Occasionally, we may ask that you have some tests prior to your first appointment, but you will be fully informed as to what you need to do.

Improving your general health will have a positive impact on your physical wellbeing; Whether you want to lose weight, get more active or quit smoking, there are many resources available at the Better Health website <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health>

Your mental wellbeing is also important and resources to help you can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/top-tips-to-improve-your-mental-wellbeing>

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you have any concerns prior to your first appointment, please contact your GP in the first instance.

If your symptoms get worse, this may indicate a 'flare-up'.

A flare is unpredictable and may start suddenly. It can last for some hours, days or even months, if not treated. A flare may result in :

- Increased swelling
- Worsening Pain
- Increased Joint stiffness
- Increased tiredness
- Feeling unwell or feverish
- Decreased appetite.

We recommend you review our patient leaflet which can be found using this link.:

[Rheumatology advice line GHPI1548 01 20.pdf](#) ([gloshospitals.nhs.uk](https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk)) and https://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/documents/10215/Managing_a_flare_GHPI1549_01_20.pdf

The Rheumatology Advice Line is an answerphone service that is open Monday to Friday during the day. It is not an emergency line. We will do our best to return your call within 48 hours although some queries may take longer. Sometimes we may need to speak to a doctor or consult your medical notes before offering you advice.

Rheumatology Advice Line Gloucestershire Royal Hospital Tel: 0300 422 6412 Monday to Friday, **10:00am to 1:45pm** Cheltenham General Hospital Tel: 0300 422 3667 Monday to Friday, **10:00am to 1:45pm or alternatively email** ghn-tr.rheumadvice@nhs.net.

Urgent Health Advice For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it is 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.

Life Threatening Emergencies

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

Additional Support

For advice and support for a Healthier lifestyle, please review the information we have on our website at www.ghc.nhs.uk and/or Healthy Lifestyles Gloucestershire www.hlsghos.org

Support groups and further information:

You may find the following resources and support groups helpful:

Arthritis Care & Research : www.versusarthritis.org

The Psoriasis and Psoriatic Alliance : www.papaa.org

National Ankylosing Spondylosis Society : www.nass.co.uk

Lupus UK : www.lupusuk.org.uk

Back pain : www.backcare.org.uk

Scleroderma Society : www.sclerodermasociety.co.uk

British Sjogrens Syndrome Association : www.bssa.uk.net

Vasculitis UK : www.vasculitis.org.uk

The Stop Smoking Service provides a range of options to help you quit including support from an advisor, stop smoking medications, e-cigarettes and a digital offer for those who wish to quit by themselves. If you are not ready to quit just yet but would like more information on how to protect your family, Smoke free Homes, advises on how to make your home and car smoke free.

The Weight Management Service supports adults aged 18 years or over who want to lose weight and have been identified as obese.

Why not download the BEST YOU App on your smart phone



Create goals and track your progress PLUS regularly updated free tips, top advice, easy recipes and much more.

Whether you intend to:

- Increase your activity levels
- Stop smoking
- Reach /maintain a healthy weight
- Reduce the amount of alcohol you drink

...using Best-You is proven to help you achieve your goals.

Contact Us

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