

Rheumatology Specialist Nurse Service - telephone advice line

Department of Rheumatology

Information for Patients

Produced: January 2023
Updated: November 2024
Review: January 2026
Leaflet number: 1352 Version: 1.1

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 have a telephone advice line for patients who are under the care of the rheumatology department, including community hospitals. This will let you get 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**, or you can contact the telephone number of **0116 259 5819** and **select option 5**. Lines are open Monday to Friday between 8am and 4pm.

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.

You will be asked to leave a voice message and will be booked a telephone slot, you will receive a text message to confirm the booking.

Please have this information ready:

- NHS or hospital number
- Date of birth
- Why you are calling
- Please say if you suffer with connective tissue disease, Lupus, Vasculitis or giant cell arteritis

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

You will be asked identity questions and 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?**

When should I call the advice line?

You should call the advice line if:

- you have a bad 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.

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.

When should I not call the advice line?

If you have long lasting diagnosed pain – please contact your GP first.

Please do not call the advice line:

- To change an appointment: please call the booking centre number given on the next page or contact the service direct on 0116 258 5819 option 1
- For blood forms: 0116 258 5819 option 2
- Prescription queries: 0116 258 5819 option 2
- To contact the medical secretary team call 0116 258 5819 option 4
- To speak to the medical day case unit at ward 17 and 19 at Leicester General Hospital call 0116 258 5819 option 3
- To get test results, unless you have been told to at your last appointment.
- 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.

More 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

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
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