

Rheumatology – First Outpatient Appointment

Introduction

The Covid 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.

Waiting Times As a guide

Referral to treatment waiting times are available on the Trusts Website:

[Rheumatology - The County Hospital, Wye Valley NHS Trust - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Guidance for Patients

At Hereford County Hospital we treat the following conditions for patients who meet the referral criteria into Rheumatology:

- Inflammatory Arthritis
- Vasculitis
- Connective tissue disease
- Spondyloarthropathy
- Osteoarthritis
- Fibromyalgia/Musculoskeletal pain/Hypermobility
- Osteoporosis

Further information on rheumatological conditions or osteoporosis is available on the following websites

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/>

<https://www.theros.org.uk/>

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

The referral from your GP will have been reviewed and triaged by the Rheumatology team to grade your clinical priority based on the information in the referral.

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

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

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

GP surgeries are still open

If you experience an increase in symptoms, you should in the first instance contact your General Practitioner for review and advice.

GP surgeries are still open and are working differently to how they did before the COVID-19 pandemic. GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations. Face-to-face appointments are still being given to those who need it.

When you phone or use an online form to contact your GP surgery to make an appointment, you will be asked some questions which are designed to help staff guide you to the most appropriate clinical person to help you with your condition. This could be a nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, GP or paramedic.