

My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

Specialty Medicine: Rheumatology



Introduction

The Rheumatology department provides a variety of services for patients referred by their primary care provider or other hospital specialists.

The department offers consultant led services with specialist and subspecialist clinics provided by a dedicated team seeking to provide high quality assessment and treatment of a wide range of rheumatological conditions.

Your consultant or specialist doctor will be able to discuss any examination findings and investigation reports with you during to your appointment and will liaise with your referring GP as required.

Before your appointment it may be helpful to note down your symptoms and keep a diary to determine whether the symptoms occur in a regular pattern. Please bring a list of any medications that you are taking with you. If you have previously had investigations such as an ultrasound prior to your appointment, it would be useful to bring the report with you, if you have these. If you have seen a consultant previously at another hospital, it would be useful to bring details of any consultations, treatments and investigations with you.

Additional Information for Patients

Whilst you are waiting for your appointment, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. To support local Kent and Medway residents to stop smoking, Medway Council has been commissioned to provide free stop smoking support to the Medway community. Kent Community Healthcare also offers services to residents in Swale.

Call: 01634 334 800 or 0800 234 6805 for Medway or 0300 123 1220 for Swale

Email: medwaystopsmokingservice@nhs.net or oneyou.kent@nhs.net

Websites:

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/stopsmoking>

<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/one-you-kent/one-you-smokefree/>

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

Find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) living in Medway and Swale and your body mass index (BMI) is above average.

Use this tool to calculate your BMI: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator/>

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A Better Medway offers different levels of support to maintain a healthy weight including telephone support, virtual and app-based support options.

Call: 01634 334 814

Website: https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200535/adult_weight_loss

BMI of 28+

You can get free support from **A Better Medway**, if your BMI is 28 or over if at least one of the following applies:

- you have Type 1 and 2 Diabetes or Metabolic Syndrome
- you have problems with your heart, circulation, hypertension or high blood pressure
- you have been diagnosed with anxiety/depression
- you need to lose weight before receiving another medical treatment or surgery
- you have a serious long-term health condition that is adversely affected by your weight such as muscular skeletal disorders (back pain, mobility issues) and asthma
- you're from a black or ethnic minority background.

BMI of 25+

If you have a Body Mass Index of 25 or higher Better Health Let's Do This – Lose Weight website provides online support to help you lose weight and includes access to the NHS 12-week weight loss plan.

The NHS 12-week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/managing-your-weight/>

Healthy eating and being active

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- **One You Eat Better** (website) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet.
- **Better Health - Get Active** (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition.

Sugar Smart is a campaign to raise awareness of hidden sugars, recommended levels and healthy alternatives by encouraging individuals, groups, businesses, schools and organisation to join the campaign and make a pledge. To find out how you can join in, become sugar smart and make good choices about what you, your family, and your colleagues eat, please visit our website <https://www.sugarsmartuk.org/>

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What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Please contact your GP or the Rheumatology department if you experience worsening of your symptoms or if you develop new symptoms.

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 – dial 999 immediately.

GP and Primary Care services

GP practices help patients to manage most conditions and are able to determine whether additional investigations and referrals to hospital services are required.

GP practices continue to make best use of telephone, online and video consultations to enable the maximum number of patients to receive medical assessment and advice when it is required. Face-to-face appointments are routinely offered for 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 healthcare professional to help you with your condition. This could be a GP, nurse, clinical pharmacist, physician's associate, or paramedic.

A list of GP practices with relevant contact details are available on the following website:

<https://www.kentandmedwayccg.nhs.uk/your-health/local-services/general-practice-services>

Contact Medway NHS Foundation Trust

A dedicated e-mail address for the Medway Patient Advice and Liaison Service: medwayft.pals@nhs.net

<https://www.medway.nhs.uk/>