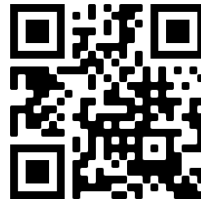


Rheumatology Website and Telephone Advice Line

<https://services.nhslothian.scot/Rheumatology>



www.EdRheum.org



0131 537 1405

Rheumatology Telephone Advice Line

Please check the NHS Lothian Rheumatology website first-
it may have the answer to your query.

Your phone query will be recorded on an **answering machine**. The Rheumatology Nurse Practitioners will aim to answer as soon as possible between Monday and Friday. **This line is not for emergencies.**

When to call the Advice Line

- If you are experiencing a flare which has not responded to your usual self-help treatments (see below)
- If you are experiencing any medication related side-effects
- If you are concerned about your blood results
- If you require advice on any aspect of your rheumatology medications.

Please do not use the line if...

- You need to change your appointment time with the Nurse Practitioner. Please phone our secretaries on **0131 537 3677** for this
- You need to change your appointment with your Rheumatologist. Instead please phone the appointments office on **01506 522 180**.

Managing a flare

What is a flare?

Your arthritis may have been well controlled and suddenly one morning you wake up and feel as bad as you did before you started treatment. It can be very frustrating. We're not sure why it happens. Sometimes it's after an infection or a particularly stressful period in your life. A flare can last from a few days to weeks.

What is a flare?

Flares are unpredictable and hopefully temporary. But if it happens too frequently we may need to look at your medication and either change the dose or use another medication.

What can you do yourself?

- Continue to take your medication regularly. For pain relief you can use paracetamol or take over the counter pain relief medication (for a short period of time)
- Heat/cool packs (do not place these directly on the skin- wrap the pack in a towel first). Heat can help ease the pain and cool packs can reduce the swelling
- Keep moving- gentle stretches and exercises or simply moving the joint may ease your symptoms. You can gradually increase this as the flare settles
- Get rest- you can often feel fatigued when you are having a flare. You need to balance this with some activity so that you don't get too stiff
- Use distraction- doing an activity or interest can help distract you from the pain
- Minimise effort- for example sit down to comb your hair, brush your teeth, or get washed. Keep things close to hand where you can reach them easily. Try to keep some healthy meals handy in the freezer
- Try relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation. Have a warm bath/shower. This can help relieve stress as well as easing joint stiffness
- Let people know, so they can understand. Delegate household tasks to family and friends if you can

- Have a plan – plan ahead for obligations like work. Talk to your manager about perhaps reducing hours at these times or working from home, if possible
- At your clinic appointment, talk to your Rheumatologist about a plan for managing a flare when your usual medicines aren't enough.

Important phone numbers

Nurse Appointments **0131 537 3677**

Appointments office **01506 522 180**

Consultant's Secretary **0131 537 1000** (the switchboard will transfer your call)

Useful websites

Our website: <https://services.nhsllothian.scot/Rheumatology>

EdRheum: www.EdRheum.org

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

National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS):
<https://nras.org.uk/>

National Axial Spondyloarthritis Society (NASS)
<https://nass.co.uk>

Translation Services

This leaflet may be made available in a larger print, Braille or your community language.