Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Your Rheumatology Department

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Your Rheumatology Department

Patient Information

Rheumatology Services

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Your Rheumatology Department

Many people with arthritis will find they need to visit a rheumatology department. This information leaflet will give you some idea of who you might see within the Rheumatology department at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust.

Teamwork

The rheumatology department is led by rheumatologists and a team of health professionals. The team includes Specialist Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Podiatrist, Pharmacist, Orthotist.

Rheumatologist

Rheumatologists are Doctors who are specialists in arthritis. They play a key role in understanding exactly what is wrong with you and in deciding the best way to treat your condition.

The rheumatologist may use various tests to assist in making a diagnosis such as blood tests, x-rays, bone scans, computerised tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). The rheumatologist may require you to have regular blood tests to monitor medication that you have been given.

Rheumatology Specialist Nurses

The nurse specialist is often the first point of contact after you are given a diagnosis and will provide advice to you and your family about your condition and your medication. This appointment with the specialist nurse will allow you to ask questions about your condition/medication and discuss any concerns you may have.

This appointment with the specialist nurse is a valuable opportunity to allow you to learn more about your condition.

Telephone Advice Line

The nurse specialists also run a telephone advice line which offers help and advice to you and your family about your rheumatology condition/medication. You may need to leave an answer phone message and a nurse will try and return your call within 48 hours. If you cannot wait 48 hours then please see your own general practitioner for advice.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists are concerned with how arthritis impacts upon daily life for example difficulties in washing, dressing, meal preparation, hobbies and work. The Occupational Therapist can assist you in regaining and maintaining independence by recommending adaptive equipment, teaching you relaxation techniques, educating you on how to look after your joints and reduce fatigue. It may be necessary to provide you with supports or splints to help your hands/wrists.

Physiotherapy

Physiotherapists are particularly involved in helping you maintain strength, movement and function of the areas of your body affected by your condition.

As arthritis can affect your joints, muscles and tendons it is important to keep them in good working order which means a lifelong commitment on your part to an exercise programme. Your physiotherapist will be aware of any constraints you have caused by your condition or other health issues and will work with you to enable you to have a personalised exercise programme.

The Physiotherapist will also be able to advise you on possible leisure and recreational activities and if necessary try alternative methods of pain relief such as acupuncture or a TENS machine (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation).

Podiatry

The Podiatrist will be able to give you invaluable advice about the care and protection of your feet which may include advice about selecting footwear or providing you with specialist insoles or footwear.

Surgical Appliances

An Orthotist is who your consultant may refer you to if you require a special appliance not readily available.

Pharmacy

If you have any questions about your medicines or how to take them, you can ask a pharmacist for advice. They carry out vital monitoring of medications to ensure your safety.

Useful Rheumatology Contacts at Wrightington Hospital:

Appointments: 01257 256241

Nurse Specialist: 01257 256242

Occupational Therapy: 01257 256306

Physiotherapy: 01257 256305

Podiatry: 01257 256305

Other useful contact numbers and websites:

Arthritis Care

www.arthritiscare.org.uk

National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS)

Helpline: 0800 298 7650

www.nras.org.uk

Arthritis Research UK

www.arthritisreserachuk.org



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