

# Your Rheumatology Department

## Patient Information

### Rheumatology Services



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:  
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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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](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk)

### National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS)

Helpline: 0800 298 7650

[www.nras.org.uk](http://www.nras.org.uk)

### Arthritis Research UK

[www.arthritisresearchuk.org](http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org)

Please use this space to write notes or reminders.

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
Wigan Lane  
Wigan  
WN1 2NN

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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

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This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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