

Getting the most from your outpatient appointment - Rheumatology

Please let us know if you can't make it

We take it seriously when patients don't attend without letting us know in good time. After all, this is a missed opportunity to see someone else in need. If you fail to attend clinic you will need to be referred by your GP before you can get another appointment. If you need to contact us about your appointment please call or email us

Phone: 0800 474 386

It is important to wear loose clothing and not too many layers

You may have to undress and be examined — so wear an outfit that is easy to get on and off. The Rheumatologist may want to examine all your joints, sometimes with the ultrasound, even joints that are not painful.

Don't wear nail polish or cover up rashes with makeup

Rheumatologists look at the skin and nails. Makeup and nail polish can hide things that make a difference when making a diagnosis.

Plan your travel

If you're driving or getting public transport, plan your route in advance. If you're planning to park in the hospital car park make sure you have plenty of time, the car park is often very busy. Give yourself extra time so you can arrive feeling calm and have time to fill out the forms in the waiting room.

Please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment.

Make sure you have had your tests

If you have regular blood tests make sure you have had one in the last 6 weeks. If your doctor has given you a form for an x-ray or ultrasound make sure you have been to have that done. If you haven't done a blood test in the last 6 weeks, and you do not have a blood test form, please call the rheumatology department on 0800 474 386. Mention your name and NHI clearly.

Bring a list of the names and doses of any medicines you're taking

This includes anything you are taking for a short time, such as antibiotics or over the counter medication. If you find it hard to write a list, just bring everything you take.

Write down any questions you have for the doctor

It's important to be honest and open with your rheumatologist from the first time you meet. Be ready to ask and answer questions. Tell your doctor how you feel and what you do to take care of yourself. If you write down the questions you have, you are less likely to forget

Think about asking a family member or friend to come to the appointment with you

It can often feel like there's a lot to take in and it's good to have someone else there to take notes or just for someone else to hear it too.