

FAQs

Please see the following page for frequently asked questions regarding your rheumatological condition.

If you cannot find the answer to your question or wish to discuss in more detail you can contact the nurse practitioner led telephone advice line Telephone Advice Line.

1) How often do I need to get my blood taken?

This depends on what medication you are on.

When starting Methotrexate, Sulfasalazine and Leflunomide bloods should be taken every fortnight for the first 6 weeks. If your bloods are stable it can then be reduced to monthly for 3 months, then 3-monthly thereafter.

For **biologic medications**, you will be advised of the monitoring requirements in writing in advance of starting your medication. However we do have further information here.

[\(hyperlink to our blood monitoring\)](#)

2) Should I stop my Rheumatology drugs if I have an infection?

Most Rheumatology medications should be stopped if you have an infection. The exceptions to this are hydroxychloroquine and sulfasalazine, which can be continued while you have an infection. We advise stopping your medication for 2 weeks until cleared of infection.

3) Should I let you know if I have stopped or not started my medication?

If you decide not to start a new medication or have stopped it due to side effects, please let us know as we may need to adjust your medications and follow up appointments.

4) What do I do if I am having side effects from my medication?

This depends on what the side effect is and how severe it is.

If you are having trouble breathing because your tongue/mouth/lips have swollen, always phone 999.

If you are having intolerable side effects from your medication, please contact us via the Advice Line.

5) Can I have a steroid injection?

Yes, if you have a flare of your disease which is not settling. Advice on how to manage a flare is provided here. [\(hyperlink to flare management questions\)](#)

6) What are good sources of information about my condition and medications?

Please see our individual pages on conditions and drugs for more information. [\(hyperlink to info on individual medication\)](#)

7) If I want to try for a baby do I need to stop my medication?

This depends on the medication you are on and you can find out more information on each medication here [\(hyperlink to info on individual medication\)](#). Please discuss with your consultant if you are considering starting a family.

8) Should I continue my other medication when I start my new rheumatology medication?

Yes, unless you have been told to stop something you are already taking.

10) What about vaccination?

Certain “Live” vaccines are not safe with some rheumatology drugs. Other vaccines are strongly recommended such as the COVID-19, Flu and Pneumonia vaccines. For more details on vaccinations please view here [\(hyperlink to vaccinations\)](#)