



Your rheumatology referral

Information for patients and families

RheumReferral

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Why have I been referred?

Your clinician would like a rheumatologist to look at your symptoms or test results. Rheumatologists are doctors who specialize in conditions of the joints, muscles, bones and immune system, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, gout and vasculitis.

How long will I wait?

Waiting times vary. Referrals are usually sorted by urgency, so people who need to be seen quickly are booked first. If you haven't heard anything in the time your clinician expected, ask your clinic to check on the referral.

While you wait

- Keep taking your medicines as advised. Don't stop any medicine suddenly without talking to your clinician.
- Take photos of any swelling, rash or color change in your fingers when it is at its worst.
- Keep a short diary: which joints are affected, how long you are stiff in the morning, and anything that helps or makes it worse.
- Stay as active as you comfortably can.

What to bring to your appointment

- ☐ A list of all your medicines, including over-the-counter medicines and supplements
- ☐ Your photos and symptom diary
- ☐ Any recent test results or scan reports you have
- ☐ Names of other doctors you see
- ☐ Your questions, written down

Get help sooner if you have

- A new headache, pain in the jaw when chewing, or any change in your vision, especially if you are over 50
- A hot, swollen, very painful joint with a fever
- Trouble swallowing or breathing, or weakness that is getting worse quickly
- A finger or toe that stays white, blue or black, or a painful sore that won't heal
- Coughing up blood, very little urine, or new swelling of your legs

Contact your clinic the same day, or go to the emergency department.

Your clinic's contact details

General information only. It doesn't replace advice from your own clinicians.