



Royal Berkshire  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Rheumatology Telephone Advice Line

Information for patients

Tel: 0118 322 6574 (24/7 answerphone)

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# **This leaflet explains how the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust's Rheumatology Telephone Advice Line works and what you can expect if you use it.**

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## **About us**

The Advice Line is a service run by the Rheumatology Team at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust.

There is a 24/7 answerphone, Tel: 0118 322 6574.

On Monday to Friday between 1pm and 3pm your call may be answered directly by a member of the team.

For rheumatology appointments, please contact the Clinical Admin Team on: Tel: 0118 322 7969 or email: [rbb-tr.CAT9@NHS.net](mailto:rbb-tr.CAT9@NHS.net).

## **The Advice Line is not for emergencies**

Please also see the Rheumatology FAQs, which may assist you:

<https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/leaflets/rheumatology-medication-frequently-asked-questions-faq>

If you require urgent medical advice, you must contact your GP surgery, the NHS 111 helpline, your local walk-in centre or, if appropriate, your local Emergency Department (A&E).

## **How does the Advice Line work?**

The Advice Line is an answerphone service that is available 24 hours a day. Messages will be accessed by the Rheumatology Team Monday-Friday 9am and 4pm (excluding bank holidays).

We aim to respond to messages left within 5 working days.

If you are unavailable when the nurse returns your call, we will attempt to contact you a maximum of 3 times. After 3 unsuccessful attempts, you will need to contact the Advice Line again if you still need advice.

If your enquiry was in response to a DAWN message, we will try to contact you again, and please be aware that our number may be displayed as 'ID withheld' or 'spam' on your mobile.

## **When NOT to contact the Rheumatology Advice Line:**

- For emergencies (see page 2).
- For non-rheumatology queries.
- To obtain test results, unless specifically asked to do so by the clinical team.

## **When to call the Advice Line:**

- If you have a flare up of your condition that has not improved with your usual treatments and painkillers after 3 days.
- If you are experiencing side-effects, which you feel may be caused by the medications prescribed for your arthritis.
- If you experience a reaction to an injection given in the Rheumatology Clinic.
- If you have concerns about your symptoms, medications or treatment that need to be addressed before your next appointment.
- If you need to respond to a telephone message left by the DAWN Monitoring Team.

## **When leaving messages please remember:**

- Your full name and date of birth.
- Your hospital number and / or NHS number.
- A telephone number where we can contact you during working hours.

## Useful contacts and further information

- **RBFT Rheumatology Department FAQ:** <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/leaflets/rheumatology-medication-frequently-asked-questions-faq>
- **NHS 111:** <https://111.nhs.uk/>
- **NHS website:** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/rheumatoid-arthritis/living-with/>
- **NHS Covid-19 advice:** <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/>
- **Arthritis Action:** 0203 781 7120 [www.arthritisaction.org.uk](http://www.arthritisaction.org.uk)
- **British Society of Rheumatology:** 0800 2987650 [www.rheumatology.org.uk](http://www.rheumatology.org.uk)
- **Lupus UK:** 0170 873 1251 [www.lupusuk.org.uk](http://www.lupusuk.org.uk)
- **National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society:** 0208 741 1515 [www.nass.co.uk](http://www.nass.co.uk)
- **National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society:** 0800 298 7650 [www.nras.org.uk](http://www.nras.org.uk)
- **Royal Osteoporosis Society:** 0808 800 0035 [www.theros.org.uk](http://www.theros.org.uk)
- **Versus Arthritis:** 0300 790 0400 [www.versusarthritis.org](http://www.versusarthritis.org)

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

RBFT Rheumatology, Siumkan Lee, Lead Nurse Rheumatology, December 2025. Next review due: December 2027.