



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Rheumatology Patient- Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

Information for patients

 PIFU direct tel: 0118 322 7969

Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

What is Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)?

Patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU) puts you, the patient, in control of when you are seen by the Rheumatology Department.

Attending regular outpatient appointments scheduled by the hospital can cause unnecessary anxiety – eg time taken to travel, park and wait for the appointment – if your condition is stable.

Sometimes, regular outpatient appointments may not result in any change to your treatment. In fact, your condition may flare up in between regular booked appointments and it's during this time that you really do need our input.

Patient-Initiated Follow-Up will put you in control of making an appointment when you need it the most.

For all other concerns, or if you are feeling unwell, your GP will remain your first point of contact.

How does it work?

You will be advised by the Rheumatology team if your condition is now suitable to have your follow-ups as patient-initiated instead of the regular appointments scheduled by the hospital.

Your clinician will have advised you about the process and given you this patient information sheet for you to consider if you want to have your follow-ups in this way; it is your decision.

How will I book a patient initiated appointment?

Booking an appointment to see the team is a quick and easy process. Just call the number on the cover of this leaflet and a member of our administration team will arrange an appointment for you **within 10 working days**.

You will also be offered the opportunity to speak with a specialist nurse for immediate advice, if required.

Will you still be looking after me if I do not call for a PIFU?

Yes, we will arrange a follow-up appointment after two years to check that your condition is still stable.

If you have any concerns associated with your condition, but not a flare up, you can contact the Rheumatology Advice Line on 0118 322 6574.

What if I am worried and change my mind about this style of follow-up?

Just tell us and we will go back to booking regular hospital appointments for you to attend for your rheumatology review. Please discuss any concerns with a member of the team who will be happy to help.

When should I call for a PIFU?

You should call if you experience a flare-up of your symptoms and need to be seen in the clinic in the next 10 working days. You will also have the opportunity to speak with a specialist nurse for immediate advice, if required.

When not to use PIFU

If you require urgent medical advice you should contact your GP, NHS 111, your local Walk-in centre or, if you are really unwell, your local Emergency Department (A&E).

How do I arrange an appointment?

If you have a flare of your symptoms and need advice or an appointment, just follow the steps below and the team will help you.

5 Easy Steps:

- 1 Call the Rheumatology team on 0118 322 7969 (between 9am and 4pm).
- 2 Explain to the Rheumatology team you need to have a flare follow-up appointment.
- 3 Agree an appointment date and time.
- 4 Decide whether you need immediate clinical advice for your symptoms from the specialist nurse.
- 5 Attend your clinic appointment.

In the event you need to leave a message when you call, please leave the following information:

- ✓ Your full name and date of birth.
- ✓ Your hospital number and/or NHS number.
- ✓ A telephone number where we can call you during normal hours between 8am – 4pm.
- ✓ Date of your last Rheumatology appointment.

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