



Patient & Family Guide

2023

# Welcome to the Rheumatology Clinic



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Welcome to the Rheumatology Clinic

- Rheumatic diseases can cause:
  - › painful inflammation (swelling)
  - › pain in your muscles, joints, or tissue
- Some rheumatic diseases can also affect your organs.
- Rheumatic diseases affect each person differently. Your health care team will work with you to decide which treatment is best for you.

## **Your health care team includes:**

- › Your primary health care provider (family doctor)
- › A rheumatologist (a doctor with special training in rheumatic [inflammatory] disease)
- › Medical students
- › Residents
- › Registered Nurses (RNs)
- › Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)
- › Other clinic staff

- **The Rheumatology Clinic does not provide primary health care.** Please see your primary health care provider for any other health concerns. They can contact your rheumatologist as needed.
- You may be asked if you would like to take part in a clinical research project. You do not have to. You will have the same care whether or not you choose to take part.

## **Before your visit**

- Ask your pharmacist if any of the medications your rheumatologist prescribed need to be refilled.
  - › Bring a list of these medications with you to your appointment.
  - › Ask your rheumatologist for prescriptions for these medications during your appointment.
- Bring a list of all the medications you take (including over-the-counter medications, vitamins, supplements, and herbal products).
- For each medication, include:
  - › The name
  - › The dose (amount) you take
  - › How often you take it

- Plan to arrive 15 to 20 minutes early to find parking and register for your appointment.

## **During your visit**

- Ask your rheumatologist for any test results.  
**Test results are not given over the phone.**
- Be honest with your team. This is important so we can find the best ways to help you feel as well as possible. Talk with your health care team about:
  - › how you are feeling.
  - › your symptoms.
  - › how you take your medications.
- A nurse may call before or after your appointment to give you information about your condition.
- A nurse may call to teach you about your medication if:
  - › this is your first visit to the clinic.
  - › you have received a new diagnosis.
  - › you have started a new medication.
- Call the Rheumatology Clinic at 902-473-4161 if you need any of the following:
  - › Book, change, or cancel an appointment
  - › A new blood collection form
  - › Confirm your appointment

- › Check on the status of your referral (find out when you will be seen by a rheumatologist)
- › Talk to a nurse about your rheumatology condition
- A recorded message will list these options and tell you which button to press.

### **Please note:**

- If you call the clinic to change an appointment, we may not call you back.
  - › We will send you a new appointment time in the mail. This may take 2 to 3 weeks.
  - › We will offer you the next available appointment, but please keep in mind that availability may be limited.
- If you call the clinic for a new lab requisition, we will send it to you in the mail.
- If you do not get your requisition after 3 weeks:
  - › Call 902-473-4161.
  - › Listen to the recording and press the button for your rheumatologist's team (team A or team B).
  - › Leave a voicemail telling your team that you have not received your requisition.

## **If you need to cancel your appointment:**

- › **Call 902-473-4161 at least 48 hours (2 days) before your appointment.**
- › **If you miss an appointment and did not call to cancel, we will not automatically rebook your appointment.** You will get your new appointment date and time by mail 4 to 6 weeks before the appointment.
- **Try to be on time for your appointment, and cancel only if needed. This is very important.** It helps us plan your care and the care of other patients.

## **Resources**

These websites have information about rheumatic diseases.

### **RheumInfo**

- › <https://rheuminfo.com>

### **Arthritis Society Canada**

- › [www.arthritis.ca](http://www.arthritis.ca)

## **Blood Collection Clinics**

### **Nova Scotia Rehabilitation and Arthritis Centre (Rehab Centre)**

1341 Summer Street  
Halifax, NS B3H 4K4

#### **Hours:**

- › Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday:  
10:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.
- › Tuesday: 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- › Weekends and holidays: Closed

### **Bayers Road Centre**

7071 Bayers Road, Suite 141  
Halifax, NS B3L 2C2  
Phone: 902-454-1661

#### **Hours:**

- › Monday to Friday: 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- › Saturday: 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- › Sunday and holidays: Closed

#### **To make an appointment:**

- Phone: 902-473-2074
- Book online:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/blood-collection](http://www.nshealth.ca/blood-collection)

# Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

*Prepared by:* Rheumatology Clinic, Nova Scotia Rehabilitation and Arthritis Centre

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.