Patient & Family Guide
2026

Welcome to the Rheumatology Clinic

nova scotia health

www.nshealth.ca

Welcome to the Rheumatology Clinic

- A rheumatic (inflammatory) disease is a condition that 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 right for you.
- **Your health care team includes:**
  - Your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner)
  - A rheumatologist (a doctor who specializes in treating rheumatic diseases)
  - Medical students
  - Resident doctors
  - Registered nurses (RNs)
  - Licensed practical nurses (LPNs)
  - Other clinic staff (like booking clerks, administrative assistants, and unit aides)

- **The Rheumatology Clinic does not provide primary health care.**
  - › Please see your primary health care provider for any general health concerns not related to your rheumatic disease. They can contact your rheumatologist if needed.
- We may ask if you would like to take part in a research trial. This is your choice. You will get the same care whether or not you choose to take part in the research trial.

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 your medications (including prescription and over-the-counter products, injections, inhalers, creams, eye drops, patches, herbal products, vitamins, and supplements) to your appointment. For each medication, include:
  - › The name
  - › The dose (amount)
  - › When you take it

- Plan to arrive 30 minutes early to find parking and **register at a kiosk** for your appointment.

During your visit

- Ask your rheumatologist for any test results. **They will not give test results over the phone.**
- Be honest with your health care team. **This is important so we can find the best ways to help you feel as well as possible.** Talk with them about:
  - How you feel
  - Your symptoms
  - How you take your medications
- A nurse may call to teach you about your medications if:
  - This is your 1st visit to the clinic
  - You have a new diagnosis
  - You have started a new medication

- **Call the Rheumatology Clinic if you need to:**
  - › Book, change, or cancel an appointment
  - › Ask for a new blood collection requisition
  - › Confirm your appointment
  - › Talk to a nurse about your rheumatic disease

  A recorded message will list these options and tell you which button to press.
  - › Phone: 902-473-4161
- **Please note:** If you call the clinic to change an appointment, we **will not** call you back to confirm. A new appointment will be booked and a letter will be mailed to you. This may take 2 to 3 weeks.
  - › We will offer you the next available appointment, but availability is limited.
- Blood collection requisitions are now done through our new computer system (called OPOR). You will **not** get a paper or an electronic copy of your lab requisition. It will be available at the lab when you go for your appointment.

- **If you need to cancel an appointment:**
  - **Call 902-473-4161 at least 48 hours (2 days) before your appointment.** You will get your new appointment date and time by mail 4 to 6 weeks before the appointment.
- **If you miss an appointment and did not call to cancel, we will not automatically rebook your 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.

For information about rheumatic diseases:

Rheuminfo

- https://rheuminfo.com

Arthritis Society Canada

- www.arthritis.ca

Blood Collection Clinics

- **To make an appointment:**
  - Phone: 902-473-2074
  - Book online: www.nshealth.ca/blood-collection
- **There is a Blood Collection Clinic at the Nova Scotia Rehabilitation and Arthritis Centre (NSRAC):**
  Hours:
  - 10:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
  - 1 to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday
  - Weekends and holidays: Closed
- **You must call to book a blood collection appointment at the NSRAC:**
  - Phone: 902-473-2074

Notes:

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 all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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

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Learn more:
https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources