Plan continued

You will then have an appointment with the doctor in the Rheumatology Clinic in a further 6 weeks.

Your follow up appointments from then on will depend on both your treatment and your condition. Any new medications added in will require the steps listed to be repeated.

If at any time you have any concerns regarding your treatment you are advised to ring the helpline. However this is not an emergency line and any very urgent concerns should be dealt with by contacting your GP surgery in the first instance.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

Author: Jackie Hall
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HELPLINE NUMBER:

Stoke Mandeville
01296 315960

Patient's guide to starting new medication
If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call PALS on 01296 316042

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**Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Medications (DMARDs)**

You have been prescribed a new medication aimed at slowing down the disease process.

Your individual medication will be explained to you, but it is important that you have an understanding of the process required for the prescribing and monitoring of these medications. This leaflet is designed to help you understand the steps of this process so that you are able to participate in your own care plan.

You will be asked to sign a 'shared care agreement' which is an agreement between the Consultant, the GP and you to participate in the safe prescribing and monitoring of these medications.

If you do not understand the plan of care or feel that the plan is not being followed, you should contact the helpline (number on the back of the leaflet) so that your concerns can be addressed.

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**Starting the new medication: What happens next?**

- **Doctor decides to start or add a new DMARD.**
- **Doctor explains the reason for the treatment.**
- **Referred to Specialist Nurse**
- **Specialist Nurse provides information and explanation about the medication and the required monitoring by blood tests to maintain a safe plan of care.**
- **Patient signs the shared care agreement.**
- **Baseline blood tests/other investigations performed as required.**
- **Patient receives prescription (to be collected from hospital pharmacy), plus blood forms for the necessary blood tests. You will receive a prescription for 8 weeks of treatment.**

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**Plan continued:**

Your blood tests will need to be performed at the hospital unless your GP surgery will agree to doing them. These can be performed at the Phlebotomy department at either Stoke Mandeville, Amersham or Wycombe hospitals.

- **A letter and the GP Protocol will be sent to your GP outlining the treatment plan.**
- **The GP signs and returns the Shared Care Agreement**
- **You will be given an appointment for 6 weeks' time with the Specialist Nurses to review your progress. At this appointment your treatment may be adjusted after discussion with the Consultant depending on your response to the medication.**
- **The prescribing and monitoring will then be taken over by your GP if the Shared Care Agreement has been signed by the GP.**