**Rheumatology Advice-line**

**Email: r.adviceline@nhs.net**

**Tel: 01423 553498 – option 2 for nurses**

**Useful Websites:**

Versus Arthritis <https://www.versusarthritis.org/>

National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS) <http://www.nras.org.uk/>

Psoriatic Arthritis Alliance <http://www.papaa.org/>

Harrogate Health Hub <https://www.harrogatehealthhub.co.uk/>

Patients Know Best <https://patientsknowbest.com/register/>

NHS choices <http://www.nhs.uk>

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence <https://www.nice.org.uk/>

For further information, contact:

**Harrogate District Foundation Trust**

**Lancaster Park Road**

**Harrogate**

**HG2 7SX**

**Main switchboard: 01423 558989**



***Flare care***

**Inflammatory Arthritis**



**Managing a Flare**

A flare of your arthritis can be due to either inflammation (stiff/painful joints after rest), or mechanical causes (stiff/painful joints after activity). The aim during a flare is to reduce joint inflammation and pain. Patients with inflammatory arthritis often know how best to manage a flare; however, here are some helpful tips:

* Ensure you take pain relief (analgesia) and/or anti-inflammatories (NSAID’s) if prescribed, on a regular basis. Try not to wait until you have excessive pain before taking. Ensure NSAID’s are taken after food. Take your pain relief approximately half an hour before undertaking any activity.
* A balance of rest and gentle activity may be beneficial, depending on whether you are having a mechanical or inflammatory flare. If resting the affected joint, pillows may help to make the joint more comfortable. Knees or feet may benefit from being elevated. Relaxation and distraction techniques can also be useful.
* Heat and cold can help ease painful/swollen joints. Ensure you use a towel to cover the source of heat/cold to protect the skin.
* You may find splints useful for hand/wrist flares. Try to use them when undertaking activities rather than all the time, as they can lead to muscle weakness
* Seek assistance from family or friends where necessary, especially during a flare. Prioritise activities and take plenty of rest periods, breaking activity into ‘bitesize’ portions. Try to ‘pace’ yourself.
* Once you are over the flare, exercise is good for mind, body and spirit. It will also ensure the muscles stay strong to support your joints. Please let us know if you would like some advice, we will happily refer you to our Physiotherapy department.
* If all else fails and your flare continues for more than a few days, you are very welcome to contact our advice line for help and support.