

Resource

NICE RA Guidelines

This guideline covers diagnosing and managing RA. It aims to improve quality of life by ensuring that people with RA have the right treatment to slow the progression of their condition and control their symptoms.

[Print](#)

- [NICE interactive flowchart – rheumatoid arthritis](#)
- [Quality standard – rheumatoid arthritis in over 16s](#)

This guideline covers diagnosing and managing rheumatoid arthritis. It aims to improve quality of life by ensuring that people with rheumatoid arthritis have the right treatment to slow the progression of their condition and control their symptoms. People should also have rapid access to specialist care if their condition suddenly worsens.

NICE has produced a COVID-19 rapid guideline on [rheumatological autoimmune, inflammatory and metabolic bone disorders](#). It recommends changes to usual practice to maximise the safety of patients and protect staff from infection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

NICE has also produced technology appraisal guidance on drug treatment for rheumatoid arthritis.

Recommendations

This guideline includes new and updated recommendations on:

- [investigations following diagnosis](#)
- [treat-to-target strategy](#) and [initial pharmacological management](#)
- [symptom control](#) and [monitoring](#)

It also includes recommendations on:

- [investigations for diagnosis](#) and [referral from primary care](#)
- [non-pharmacological management](#) and [the multidisciplinary team](#)
- [communication and education](#)
- [timing and referral for surgery](#)

Who is it for?

- Healthcare professionals

- Commissioners and providers
- People with rheumatoid arthritis and their families and carers

Guideline development process

[How we develop NICE guidelines](#)

This guideline updates and replaces NICE guideline CG79 (February 2009).

Your responsibility

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

All problems (adverse events) related to a medicine or medical device used for treatment or in a procedure should be reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency using the [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should [assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations](#) wherever possible.



Read more

[The DAS28 score](#)

The DAS28 is a measure of disease activity in rheumatoid arthritis (RA). DAS stands for 'disease activity score', and the number 28 refers to the 28 joints that are examined in this assessment.

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