University of Vermont Health

UVM Health RHEUMATOLOGY Referrals/Consult

We are prioritizing visits for patients with autoimmune inflammatory arthritis, vasculitis, and other inflammatory connective tissue disorders. ***We are not scheduling for these conditions****: fibromyalgia, hypermobility/Ehler's Danlos Syndrome, chronic fatigue or related syndromes, osteoporosis or osteoarthritis management. Below we offer guidance on popular referrals.*

POSITIVE ANA

Refer patients if they have the following symptoms: joint pain, rash, periodic fever, abnormal findings on complete blood count with differential (CBCD), other systemic symptoms, and/or other positive autoantibodies (e.g., double-stranded DNA, Sjogren's antibodies (SSA/SSB), etc). Otherwise, consider alternate non-rheumatologic diagnoses or false positive antinuclear antibody (ANA) and do not refer patient to rheumatology.

PERIPHERAL JOINT PAIN

Are the following symptoms/features present:

- Onset of arthralgia within 12 months
- Joint swelling AND tenderness on exam
- Morning stiffness > 1 hour
- C-reaction protein (CRP) or sed rate above upper limit of normal
- Rheumatoid factor or cyclic citrullinated peptide (CCP) antibody positive

If there are **4 or more** symptoms/features, place URGENT Rheum referral.
If there are **3 or less** symptoms/features, place non-urgent Rheum referral.
For all referrals in this category, please order (if not already done): CBCD, comprehensive metabolic panel, CRP, urinalysis, uric acid, Rheumatoid factor, CCP antibodies, Lyme antibody (if known exposure), X-Ray Rheumatoid series hands and feet.

BACK PAIN

Consider referral if back pain has been present for > 3 months AND at least 4 of the following inflammatory symptoms/features are present:

- Back pain started at age 40 or younger
- Back pain developed gradually
- Back pain improves with exercise
- Back pain does not improve with rest
- Back pain at night which improves upon getting up

Please order XR of sacroiliac joints, symptomatic portion of spine, and CRP.

If there are 3 or less symptoms/features, consider treatment for mechanical back pain and **do not** refer to Rheum. Seek urgent or emergency care if “red flags” are present (i.e., acute onset of pain, fever, unexplained weight loss, acute onset incontinence, history of cancer).