

## 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 CBCD, other **systemic** symptoms, and/or other positive autoantibodies (e.g., dsDNA, SSA/SSB, etc). Otherwise, consider alternate non-rheumatologic diagnoses or false positive 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
- CRP or ESR above upper limit of normal
- Rheumatoid factor or 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): CBC w/diff, CMP, CRP, urinalysis, uric acid, Rheumatoid factor, CCP antibodies, Lyme AB (if known exposure), XR 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).