

A large decorative graphic on the left side of the page, composed of several concentric, curved green bands of varying thicknesses, resembling a stylized 'C' or a series of overlapping arcs.

Arthralgia

Chemotherapy, Immunotherapy,
and Supportive Medicines

A guide for patients and carers



What is Arthralgia?

Immunotherapy treatments can cause inflammation in many different areas of the body, one of the areas being your muscles and joints. Arthralgia occurs when muscles or joints in the body become inflamed and, as a result, can be quite painful and sometimes swollen.

Many patients who have pre-existing joint conditions, such as arthritis or broken/sprained bones, can find that the immunotherapy treatment will worsen their symptoms and cause flare-ups.

How is Arthralgia diagnosed?

We can diagnose Arthralgia by completing some simple blood tests, which will identify if your inflammatory markers are raised. If they are, it may mean your symptoms are immunotherapy-induced. However, not all patients have raised inflammatory markers and can still suffer from side effects.

What treatment is available to help with Arthralgia?

We recommend trialling some simple pain relief to help with joint pain swelling. Paracetamol or anti-inflammatory pain killers can be used to reduce pain.





Why do I need to take steroids?

Sometimes pain relief will not help in reducing the swelling in your joints. If your symptoms start to affect your daily activity and do not settle, or are not controlled well with pain relief, then we can use steroids to help reduce the swelling in your joints.

If we use steroids, immunotherapy treatment could be delayed until your symptoms remain under control.

What can I do to help?

Regular exercise and moving your joints will help to keep you active. Eating a healthy, balanced diet can reduce the impact of arthralgia symptoms.

**If you experience any side effects, or notice any general changes in your health, please contact the Clatterbridge Cancer Centre hotline (24 Hours 7 Days a week):
0800 169 5555**

How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust
Clatterbridge Road, Bebington,
Wirral, CH63 4JY.

Tel: 0151 556 5000

Web: www.clatterbridgecc.nhs.uk

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