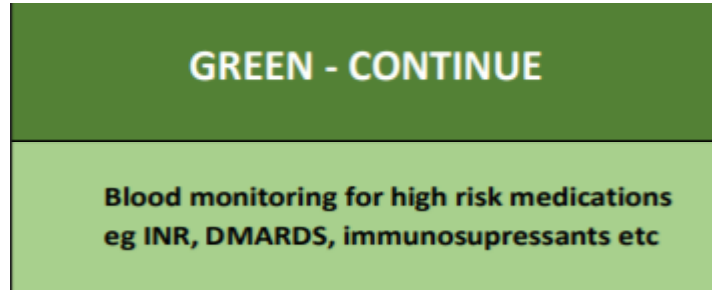


## Advice and guidance regarding DMARDs

Taken from the RCGP Guidance on workload prioritisation during COVID-19. DMARD monitoring is considered green category: Aim to continue regardless of the scale of the virus outbreak.



### Treatment

- Patients do not need to stop taking DMARD medication as a precaution unless directed otherwise by their specialist team or GP
- If a patient is infected with Covid-19, they should temporarily stop their conventional DMARD and biological therapy. They should contact their specialist service for further advice about when to restart treatment.
- However patients can continue with hydroxychloroquine if they are infected with Covid-19
- Patients on long-term glucocorticoids (e.g. steroids, prednisolone) should not stop these abruptly
- Current advice for patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 is to use paracetamol in preference to NSAIDs. Those currently on NSAIDs for other medical reasons should not however stop them.

### Monitoring

- If patient's blood results have been stable, the monitoring can be extended for 3 months
  - As long as they have no blood abnormalities, have normal renal function and are not prescribed interacting medication e.g. PPIs, NSAIDs
  - Please exclude patients on the combination of methotrexate and leflunomide. These patients who should continue to have blood monitoring as they are currently, i.e. 2 weekly or monthly, and should not be reduced to 3 monthly monitoring
  - For dermatology patients prescribed ciclosporin, please contact specialist before extending monitoring interval to 3 months
- Maximise blood tests out of hospital where local resources allow
- SWBH is no longer offering a walk-in service - patients need to ring and book an appointment. The number is 0121 507 6104 (Mon-Fri 8am-4pm)
- Sites currently providing community phlebotomy services are:  
Oldbury Health Centre, Neptune Park, Soho health Centre, Lyng Health Centre, Rowley Regis hospital, Victoria Health Centre\*

## References

- NHS England Clinical guide for the management of rheumatology patients during the coronavirus pandemic 16 March 2020 Version 1  
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/clinical-guide-rheumatology-patients-v1-19-march-2020.pdf>
- National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS) Frequently Asked questions updated 25/3/20  
<https://www.nras.org.uk/frequently-asked-questions>
- British Society for Rheumatology (BSR) Covid-19 update 25/3/20  
<https://www.rheumatology.org.uk/news-policy/details/Covid19-Coronavirus-update-members>
- British Association of Dermatologists (BAD) - Advice for Dermatology HCPs during Covid-19 pandemic  
<http://www.bad.org.uk/healthcare-professionals/covid-19>