

# Your RA *roadmap*

What to expect in your first year — and who helps at each step. There's no single path, but here's the shape of the journey.



## Early care

First weeks – 3 months



## Active RA

Settling treatment · ~3–6 months



## Controlled RA

6 months & ongoing

### How your care team helps



#### Early diagnosis and early treatment

Treatment within 4 weeks of diagnosis is the current standard.



#### Organise pre-treatment checks

Bloods, imaging and vaccinations first.



#### Start your treatment plan

Disease modifying treatments (DMARDs) like methotrexate are used to ease pain and swelling.



#### Find the right medication

DMARDs take 6–8 weeks to work. Steroids and anti-inflammatories may be used for short term relief.



#### Close monitoring

Reviews every 1–3 months, to check on pain, function and medication side effects



#### Build a team around you

GP, rheumatologist, allied health.



#### Treat to target

The goal is for remission or low disease activity in joints.



#### Long term follow up

Reviews ease to every 6 months if stable. Medication doses may be adjusted over time.



#### Whole-of-health care

Heart, bones and vaccines checked.

### What you can do



#### Learn the basics

Knowing RA helps you take the lead.



#### Keep moving

Start gently; ease off if sore.



#### Talk to us

Tell us how you really feel.



#### Play your part

Attend reviews; take medications as prescribed.



#### Manage fatigue

Sleep, pace, prioritise, delegate.



#### Small steps

Change gently; it takes time.



#### Get physical

Exercise eases pain, lifts mood.



#### Prioritise a healthy lifestyle

Keeping a healthy weight, minimizing alcohol and stopping smoking.



#### Plan ahead

Travel, family planning, surgery? Tell us early.



**Decided together, the whole way** Care shaped around your needs, goals and preferences — a shared journey, not a fixed route.