

Urgent referral to a rheumatologist: suspected rheumatoid arthritis



Assume that today's date is 21 October 2026. Using the information in the case notes, write a letter of referral to Dr Raj Menon, a rheumatologist, requesting urgent assessment and treatment. Address the letter to Dr Raj Menon, Rheumatologist, Westside Specialist Suites, Level 3, 210 Victoria Street, Westside. In your answer: expand the relevant notes into complete sentences; do not use note form; use letter format. The body of the letter should be approximately 180–200 words.

Choose one box per line: I = Include / C = Compress / O = Omit. Answers and reasons are on the webpage (scan QR).

Patient details

1. Name: Mrs Rania Haddad
2. DOB: 17/08/1982 (44 yrs)
3. Occupation: dental hygienist

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Social background

4. Married; one son aged 6
5. Smokes approx. 5 cigarettes/day; alcohol 2–3 standard drinks/wk
6. Attends gym 3x/wk — stopped 1 month ago
7. Planning to try for a second pregnancy within the next year
8. Pt upset that a locum GP in August told her the pain was 'just overuse'

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Medical history

9. Tonsillectomy age 9
10. Seasonal allergic rhinitis
11. No previous joint problems
12. Medications: progestogen-only contraceptive pill
13. Allergies: nil known
14. Family Hx: maternal aunt — rheumatoid arthritis; mother — hypothyroidism

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Presenting complaint (14/10/26)

15. 11/52 pain and swelling both hands and wrists, symmetrical; now also both feet (balls of feet)
16. Morning stiffness approx. 90 min
17. Difficulty gripping dental instruments; 1 wk off work

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Presenting complaint (14/10/26)

18. Fatigue; no rash, mouth ulcers, dry eyes or recent infection
19. Read online about turmeric for joint pain — taking turmeric/curcumin capsules (500 mg daily, OTC) for 3/52

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Examination

20. Synovitis: bilateral MCP 2–3, PIP 2–3 and wrists; tender MTP joints bilaterally; positive MTP squeeze test
21. No nodules, no rash; other systems NAD
22. BMI 23; BP 122/78

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Investigations (results 19/10/26)

23. RF 85 IU/mL (positive); anti-CCP >300 U/mL (strongly positive)
24. CRP 24 mg/L; ESR 42 mm/hr
25. FBC, LFTs, U&E normal; hepatitis B and C serology negative; CXR normal
26. X-ray hands and feet: periarticular osteopenia, no erosions

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Management

27. Naproxen 500 mg BD with esomeprazole 20 mg daily — partial relief
28. Advised smoking cessation (smoking linked to worse RA); quit support offered
29. Corticosteroids not started — to await specialist review

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Plan

30. Urgent referral to rheumatology for assessment and DMARD initiation
31. GP review 2/52

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