

Management of rheumatic diseases in the preconception, antenatal and postnatal periods

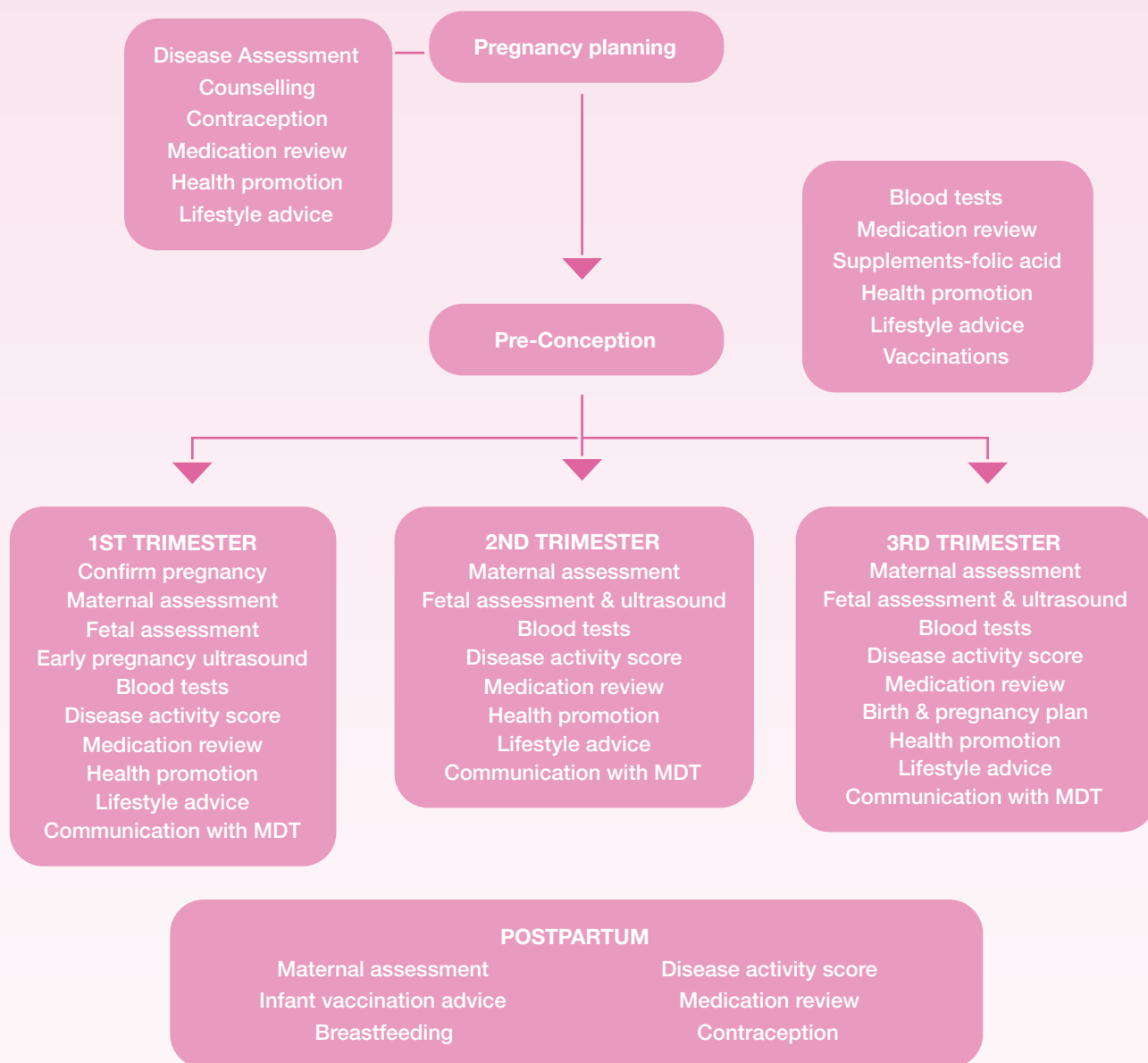
This QSD is a resource for all clinicians working in healthcare in Ireland who are involved in the care of women with rheumatic diseases before, during and after pregnancy.

Following a comprehensive literature review a number of evidence-based recommendations for management of rheumatic diseases were agreed upon.

Key Recommendations

1. Risk stratification and pregnancy planning are vital to assisting individuals with rheumatic musculoskeletal disease (RMD) to have successful pregnancy outcome whilst minimising pregnancy complications.
2. Disease activity should be assessed pre-pregnancy and be optimised prior to pregnancy with appropriate medication which is compatible with pregnancy.
3. All women and their healthcare providers should have access to pre-pregnancy advice and counselling with input from rheumatology and obstetrics services.
4. All women with rheumatic musculoskeletal disease should have the following baseline blood tests prior to pregnancy or in early pregnancy: anti-extractable nuclear antibodies (ENA) for anti-RO and anti-LA antibodies, antiphospholipid antibody syndrome screening, full blood count, renal and liver function, erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR) and c-reactive protein (CRP).
5. All women should be monitored for disease activity during pregnancy.
6. Optimal care should include at least one rheumatology review during the pregnancy.
7. Antenatal care should include regular assessment of blood pressure, urinalysis, and assessment of fetal wellbeing. Consideration should be given to low dose aspirin 75-150mg to reduce pre-eclampsia risk in women deemed to have risk factors.
8. We recommend that individual obstetric factors should guide the timing/mode of birth.
9. We recommend information and/or counselling should be provided to women on the safety of medication in pregnancy and breastfeeding to support informed shared decision making.
10. We recommend that to optimise the health of women and infants, postpartum care, and support with input from rheumatology, midwifery and obstetrics services, should be tailored to each woman's individual needs.
11. Drug therapy should be reviewed prior to conception and during pregnancy and again during breastfeeding. The risks and benefits of drug treatment to the woman and fetus should be discussed and documented by all healthcare professionals involved in the woman's care. A review of medication by a specialist pharmacist should be undertaken where available.

Algorithm: Management of women with rheumatic musculoskeletal disease of reproductive age.



Auditable standards

Audit using the key recommendations as indicators should be undertaken to identify where improvements are required and to enable changes as necessary, and to provide evidence of quality improvement initiatives.

Auditable standards for this Guideline include:

1. Number of women with RMD who attend pre-pregnancy counselling
2. Number of women attending maternity services with RMD
3. Number of women with RMD accessing MDT services during pregnancy
4. Number of women having a rheumatology review during pregnancy
5. Number of antibody screening tests performed in pregnant women with RMD
6. Maternal complication rate (e.g infection after CS birth) in women with RMD
7. Disease flare rates in women with RMD during pregnancy and post-partum.

Recommended reading:

1. Full Clinical Guideline – <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/acute-hospitals-division/woman-infants/clinical-guidelines/>
2. HSE Nomenclature for Clinical Audit – <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/nqpsd/ncca/nomenclature-a-glossary-of-terms-for-clinical-audit.pdf>
3. HSE National Framework for developing Policies, Procedures, Protocols and Guidelines at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/use-of-improvement-methods/nationalframeworkdevelopingpolicies/>
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Authors

Gorman Á, Moore L, O'Brien C, Soldati B, Veale DJ, McAuliffe FM. Management of rheumatic diseases in the preconception, antenatal and postnatal periods. National Women and Infants Health Programme and The Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. October 2023

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/acute-hospitals-division/woman-infants/clinical-guidelines/>

<https://www.rcpi.ie/faculties/obstetricians-and-gynaecologists/national-clinical-guidelines-in-obstetrics-and-gynaecology/>