

Self-help series fact sheet 11

Managing the health system

When you need to manage your health system it is handy to understand the role of each practitioner:

The role of a GP? The role of your general practitioner is likened to the role of a project manager. They are responsible for bringing all the puzzle pieces together, ensuring your medications and treatment plans are working cohesively.

The role of a practice nurse? Some medical practices employ practice nurses who can assist you by administering immunisations/flu shots, wound care and basic checks such as blood pressure.

The role of an integrative GP? An integrative GP is a medical professional who combines conventional and natural medicines and therapies to treat patients holistically. They consider a patient's physical, mental, social and spiritual health.

The role of a physiotherapist? Physiotherapists are healthcare professionals who help people move better and prevent injury or disability. They use exercise, manual therapy and education to treat a variety of conditions.

The role of an occupational therapist? An occupational therapist (OT) help people improve their ability to perform daily tasks. They work with people of all ages and social group who have injuries, illnesses or disabilities.

The role of an exercise physiologist? Exercise physiologists are allied health professionals who design exercise programs



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to help people improve their health and manage chronic conditions. They work with people who have injuries, chronic illness or are recovering from surgery.

The role of a case manager? A case manager will usually co-ordinate your treatment in the early stages after injury, or diagnosis. Case managers will often work for a rehabilitation or disability services. They may also aid you during times of change. A case manager plays a different role to a GP in that a GP will provide general medical treatment and diagnosis, while a case manager is a healthcare professional who coordinates care for a patient with complex needs, often by managing communication between different healthcare providers and ensuring they access necessary services, rather than directly providing treatment themselves. Essentially, a GP focuses on individual medical care while a case manager oversees the overall management of a patient's healthcare journey across multiple services.

The role of specialists? Specialists generally only see patients after receiving a referral from a primary health care practitioner. They provide diagnostic and treatment services in a specific area of medicine.

The role of hospitalisation? Hospitalisation refers to the process of admitting a patient to a hospital for medical treatment, where they receive intensive care, diagnostic tests, surgery or other specialised medical interventions that cannot be adequately provided in an outpatient setting. Essentially serving as a crucial component of the health care system for managing complex or critical health conditions that require close monitoring and specialised care.

During this series of fact sheets there will be a number of these tips and tricks but if you would like further information on a particular subject please feel free to contact us by emailing info@arthritisact.org.au and we will send you further information and a list of support activities.