



Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease that causes inflammation and damage to the joints. This causes the immune system to attack the synovial membrane (tissue that covers the joints). It increases the risk of osteoporosis and can affect other organs such as the eyes, heart, or lungs.

Symptoms:

- Joint pain and stiffness lasting more than an hour.
- Loss of movement in the joints.
- Fatigue or muscle weakness.
- Inflammation of the same joint on both sides of the body.
- Firm, round nodules in the joints.
- Loss of appetite or weight.

Risk Factors:

Being between 30 to 60 years old, family history with the condition, being a woman, smoking.

Diagnosis:

- **Blood Test:** Will determine if there is any inflammation or infection.
- **X-rays:** To take pictures of the joint that is causing pain and check for swelling.
- **Arthrocentesis:** A procedure to drain fluid from a joint, which is then checked for infection or other problems.
- **Synovial Biopsy:** Procedure to remove a portion of the tissue that covers a joint. The tissue is examined to determine possible causes of arthritis.

Treatment:

- **Antirheumatics:** They help slow progress, relieve pain, stiffness, and inflammation.
- **Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Analgesics (NSAIDs):** Help reduce inflammation, pain, and fever. Check with your doctor if you are allergic to aspirin.
- **Steroids:** Help decrease inflammation.
- **Biological Therapy:** Relieves inflammation, pain, and stiffness of the joints. It consists of injectable solutions that are administered under the skin or into a vein.
- **Surgery:** Procedure to remove part or all the joint and place an artificial one. It may also be

done if you have a joint infection or if the bones of your spine are pressing on your nerves.

Symptom Management:

- Physical and occupational therapy, using support devices.
- Get some rest.
- Heat and cold treatments.
- Physical activity. Talk to your doctor about the exercise regimen that's right for you.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after medical treatment, please visit your primary care physician or contact the following phone lines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS HealthCare

787-641-9133

Reference:

Rheumatoid arthritis. (2021). Retrieved from: <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/rheumatoidarthritis.html#:~:text=La%20rheumatoid%20arthritis%20is%20one,that%20men%20suffer%20rheumatoid%20arthritis.>

Prepared by licensed Health Educators.

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