

Living Well With: Rheumatoid Arthritis

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Rheumatoid Arthritis Facts



AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

Causes joint inflammation



Pain



Stiffness



Swelling

Affects about **1%** of the population

Occurs at any age (but typically at **40-50 years old**)

More common in **women**

Flares
an increase in symptoms – can occur **due to triggers**



Arthritis is a chronic disease, but it can be treated with medicines that



Relieve pain



Reduce inflammation



Modulate the immune activity that is causing the inflammation

Treatment also helps to **protect the joints** and prevent them from being irreversibly damaged by the disease.



Why Arthritis Hurts

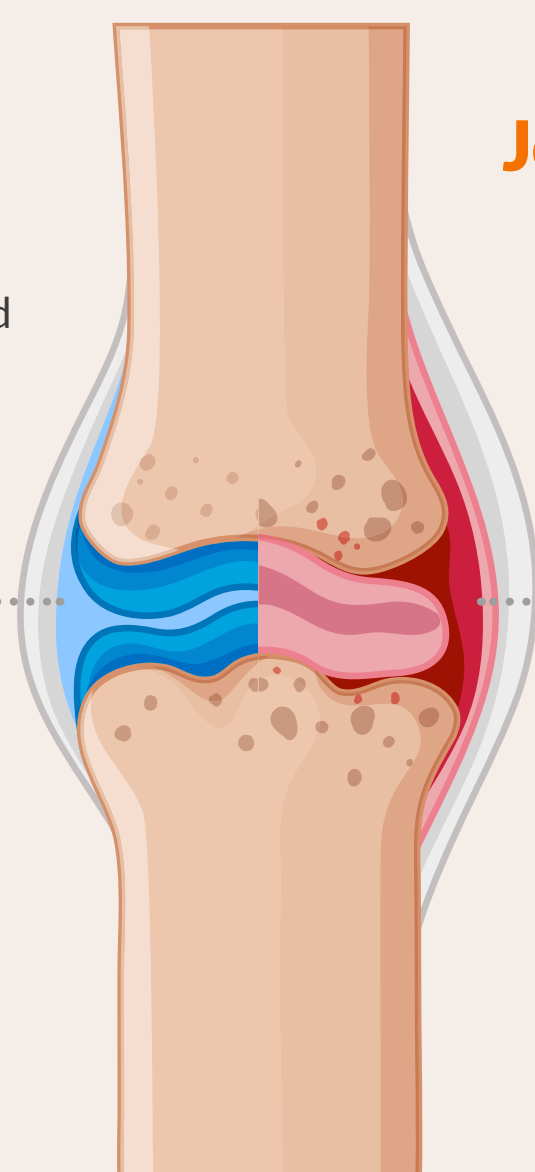
Rheumatoid Arthritis commonly affects the hands, wrists, ankles, and feet.

Other joints can be affected too.

Healthy joint

The **synovial membrane** is like an inner tube. It wraps around the joint and produces lubricating fluid that 'cushions' and nourishes the joint.

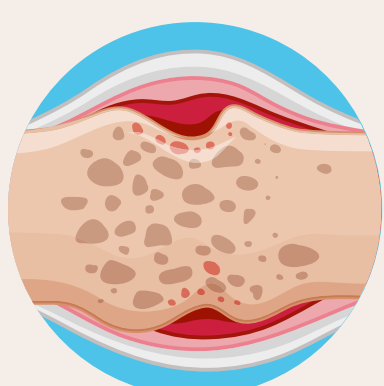
Synovial membrane



Joint affected by arthritis

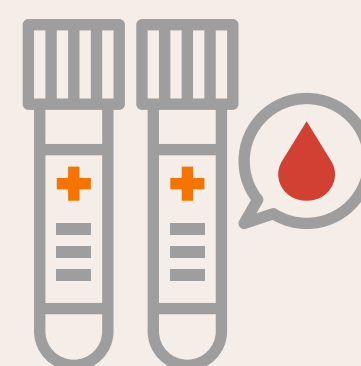
Inflamed synovial membrane

Inflamed Synovial membrane



During a flare, the **body's own immune cells attack the synovial membrane**, leading to inflammation, swelling and pain. Over time, this inflammation damages the joint, wearing it away and causing bony defects (erosions).

Managing Arthritis Well



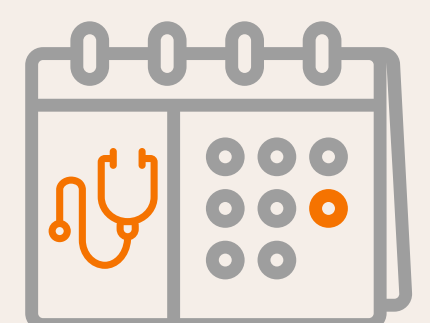
Be regular with your blood tests;

They help assess disease activity and help your doctor monitor medication side effects



Take your medication

regularly and at the prescribed dose to achieve the best outcomes



Attend your appointments consistently

To enable your doctors to monitor your progress and adjust your treatment plan

Be informed about the disease

And empower yourself to make the best of your treatment plan. Ask our nurse educators to tell you more



Discuss options

with your doctor to find the drug treatment plan that works best for you

Stay positive

As research shows that this is imperative for physical wellbeing



Adopt a healthy lifestyle

Including a balanced diet and regular exercise to achieve the best possible outcomes

