

Rheumatoid Arthritis

What is Rheumatoid Arthritis?

- An autoimmune disease where the body mistakenly attacks the joints. Which causes inflammation and swelling of the joints.
- It is a systemic disease which means it attacks other parts of the body other than the joints. It can also attack skin, eyes, and lungs.

How is Rheumatoid Arthritis diagnosed?

- Can be difficult to diagnose during early stages of disease.
- Synovial fluid aspiration: take fluid out joint for testing
- Arthroscopy: gives visual of joint
- Blood test

What are signs and symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis? (early signs are bolded)

1. Pain in joints
- 2. Stiffness in joints (especially in the morning)**
3. Swelling in joints (especially small joints in the hand)
4. Decreased movement
- 5. Tiredness**
6. Low fever
7. Weight loss

How to decrease symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis?

- stretching and flexibility exercises (low intensity)
- No jogging or heavy lifting
- Alternate heat and cold to joints
- Warm shower or bath before bed can help reduce pain.
- Do not elevate your legs, will only increase stiffness of joints.

Medications used to treat

- NSAIDS: Aspirin, ibuprofen, and Naproxen.
- Steroids: Prednisone

Why is diet important?

- Foods that can decrease inflammation
 1. Cherries & blueberries
 2. Spinach
 3. Green tea
 4. Brown rice/oats
 5. Nuts (almonds and walnuts)
 6. Black eye peas and red kidney beans

- Foods that can **increase** inflammation
 1. Processed meats
 2. Fatty foods
 3. Sugar or refined carbohydrates
 4. Alcohol

Quiz Time (optional)

Reference the handout if you are not sure. Answers are listed below

- 1) What can decrease the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis?
 - a. Jogging
 - b. Lifting weights
 - c. Warm shower or bath before bed
 - d. Elevating your legs

- 2) What medication can help with rheumatoid arthritis?
 - a. Heparin
 - b. Tylenol
 - c. Ibuprofen
 - d. Furosemide

- 3) What is one of the **early signs** of rheumatoid arthritis?
 - a. Increased movement
 - b. Runny nose
 - c. Low fever
 - d. Tiredness

- 4) What food do you want to stay away from when have rheumatoid arthritis?
 - a. Processed meats
 - b. Brownies
 - c. Cherries
 - d. Spinach

- 5) What type of disease is rheumatoid arthritis?
 - a. Infectious disease
 - b. Autoimmune disease
 - c. Kidney disease
 - d. Genetic disease

Answers to Quiz:

1. C
2. C
3. D
4. A
5. B