

Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis

What Is Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis?

Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis, also known as juvenile idiopathic arthritis, is the most common type of arthritis in children under the age of 16. Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis causes persistent joint pain, swelling and stiffness. Some children may experience symptoms for only a few months, while others have symptoms for the rest of their lives.

Symptoms

The most common sign and symptoms of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis are:

- ✓ Joint pain with motion
- ✓ Limited Motion
- ✓ Joint tenderness
- ✓ Stiffness, especially after sleeping or inactivity
- ✓ Swelling in the joints
- ✓ Joint warmth

How Does Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis Affect Children?

Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis affects large joints like knees, wrists, and ankles more than small joints. However, the hands and feet may also be affected. The good news is that kids with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis deal with it surprisingly well. Their self-esteem is no different from other children, and are just as driven to achieve, feel just as competent, and function just as well socially.

What Can Help Limit The Effects Of Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis?

- ❖ Getting regular exercise – exercise is important because it promotes both muscle strength and joint flexibility.
- ❖ Applying cold or heat. Applying cold or hot packs in the morning can help with stiffness and swelling.
- ❖ Eating well – a good balanced diet, enriched with calcium is important because children with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis are at risk of developing osteoporosis due to the disease.

What Can the School Do To Help a Child With Rheumatoid Arthritis?

Treat the child, as much as possible, like other children in the classroom

Encourage participation in physical activities, keeping in mind the recommendation of the child's doctor and/or physical therapist

Make any necessary modifications in schedule and/or responsibilities

- Extra time to move from class to class
- Provide extra set of textbooks so child doesn't have to carry heavy books back and forth from school/home
- Send assignments home when child misses school because of his/her condition

Sources: <http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/arthritis/jra.html>
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/juvenile-rheumatoid-arthritis/DS00018>

Additional Resources: http://www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/Juv_Arthritis/juvenile_arthritis_ff.asp#9
<http://www.rheumatoidarthritis.com/>