



WHAT IS RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS?

Rheumatoid Arthritis is a chronic inflammatory form of arthritis.

This disease can affect a number of different tissues and even organs, but primarily, Rheumatoid Arthritis will cause damage to the flexible synovial membrane of the joints. The effects of rheumatoid arthritis can include: **PAIN, SWELLING, STIFFNESS and EVENTUAL LOSS OF FUNCTION IN THE JOINTS.** Rheumatoid arthritis is classified as an autoimmune disease, which means that the patient's immune system has actually started to attack the body's own healthy tissue.

AREAS AFFECTED

PRIMARY TARGET:



ESPECIALLY THE SMALL JOINTS:

Hands, feet, knees, ankles, wrists, and elbows



R.A. IS REFERRED TO AS A SYSTEMIC DISEASE

meaning this inflammatory disease can affect many organs and body systems besides the joints

Skin, Eyes, Heart, Nervous System, Lungs, Blood, Musculoskeletal Structure



DEMOGRAPHICS & STATS

2.1MM

Americans have R.A., between 0.5 and 1% of the U.S adult population.



Women are three times (3x) more likely to develop RA than men



80% of R.A. patients developed the disease between the ages of 35 and 50

\$128,000,000,000

Arthritis and related conditions cost the US economy nearly \$128 billion a year in medical care and indirect costs (lost wages and productivity)



Young adults and children can develop RA (juvenile rheumatoid arthritis)



Occurs in all races and ethnic groups

CRITERIA FOR DIAGNOSIS

IF 4 OR MORE OF THESE 7 CRITERIA ARE PRESENT, THAN A DIAGNOSIS OF R.A. WILL BE MADE.

The first four criteria need to have been present for at least 6 weeks.

1. Morning stiffness in and around joints for at least one hour
2. Swelling & fluid around at least three joints at the same time
3. At least one area in the hand, wrist, or finger joints that is swollen
4. Symmetric Arthritis, meaning arthritis occurring in the same joint on both sides of the body
5. Manifestation of rheumatoid nodules (firm lumps in the skin, often occur in the pressure points of the body like the elbow)
6. Abnormal levels of rheumatoid factor in the blood
7. X-rays of the hands and wrists show signs of damage typical with RA (destruction of the bone around the involved joints).

NEW R.A. TREATMENTS AND CLINICAL STUDIES

New RA therapy passes pre-clinical testing: this therapy works in the chronic phase of the disease and targets autoreactive T lymphocytes. Moving into phase I human clinical trials in late 2012 (<http://curearthritisblog.com/rheumatoid-arthritis-treatment-passes-pre-clinical-testing/>)

AVAILABLE MEDICATIONS

STEROIDS:

Prednisone, a corticosteroid medication, can reduce inflammation and pain as well as prevent joint damage. Side Effects include bone thinning, weight gain, cataracts and diabetes. Usually prescribed to treat acute symptoms, not for long-term use

NONSTEROIDAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY DRUGS (NSAIDS):

Used to reduce swelling and reduce pain associated with RA. Over the counter variations include ibuprofen (Advil) and naproxen (Aleve). Side Effects include stomach irritation, ringing in ears, heart problems plus potential liver and kidney damage

DISEASE-MODIFYING ANTIRHEUMATIC DRUGS (DMARDS):

This medication is used to slow the progression of the disease, and can prevent joints from being permanently damaged. Common forms of DMARDS include Trexall, Azulfidine, Arava, Plaquenil, and Dynacin. Side Effects include liver damage, severe lung infections, and bone marrow suppression

IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS

They work by controlling the patients immune system. Common examples include azathioprine, cyclosporine, cyclophosphamide. Side effects include an increased risk of infection

CELEBRITIES AFFECTED BY R.A.



LUCILLE BALL

Red headed comedian famous for I Love Lucy



PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR

This artist may be the first well documented case of RA in history!



KATHLEEN TURNER

The Romancing the Stone actress was diagnosed in her mid-40's



JAMES COBURN

The "macho" movie star temporarily retired in the 80's due to his RA.



DOROTHY HODGKIN

X-ray crystallography, and won Nobel Prize in 1964



SANDY KOUFAX

This Hall of Fame Pitcher stopped playing due to damage in his elbow.

ARTHRITIS ORGANIZATIONS



THE ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION

www.arthritis.org



ARTHRITIS NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

www.curearthritis.org



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTHRITIS AND MUSCULOSKELETAL AND SKIN DISEASES

www.niams.nih.gov



AMERICAN AUTOIMMUNE RELATED DISEASES ASSOCIATION, INC.

www.aarda.org



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY

www.rheumatology.org

SOURCES

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/rheumatoid-arthritis/ds00020/dsection=treatments-and-drugs>
http://www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/rheumatic_disease/default.asp
<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20496769,00.html>
<http://www.webmd.com/rheumatoid-arthritis/>

http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/arthritis_related_stats.htm
<http://www.arthritis.org/ja-fact-sheet.php>
<http://healthfinder.gov/scripts/searchContext.asp?topic=752&branch=6&show=1>