



Is it Sore Joints—or RA?

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We often think of arthritis as general joint pain or loss of mobility that comes along as we get older. Arthritis is an umbrella term for more than 100 different diseases and can impact young people as well as old. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is one of the most common types. Read on to learn more.

What is RA?

RA is a chronic, systemic autoimmune disease that can be painful and disabling. An estimated 1.5 million people in the United States have RA, and nearly three times as many women as men have the disease. RA causes a range of symptoms, including stiffness, swelling, tenderness, and pain in the joints—particularly those in the wrists and

certain joints in the hands and feet. The joint pain is often felt in the same joints on both sides of the body. Eventually, joints may lose their range of motion and may become deformed. Over time, people with RA may see a decrease in the ability to perform their daily activities.

RA and obesity

A growing body of research is focusing on the impact of obesity on people living with RA. Obesity in RA is associated with decreased physical ability and health as well as increased pain, and signs of inflammation. Researchers are finding that heavier people may actually have more severe forms of the disease, but they still don't quite understand the connection between the two. What is known is that regular exercise may help reduce joint pain and stiffness and improve psychological well-being.

Getting treatment

Because RA is a chronic disease, those living with it may need ongoing treatment. Treatment can reduce signs and symptoms and improve physical function. If you've been diagnosed with RA, work closely with your healthcare team (such as a rheumatologist) to develop the best treatment plan for you.

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