

Rheumatoid Arthritis: Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to common questions about Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). It is written in simple language for easy understanding.

1. What is Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)?

RA is a long-term disease that causes pain, swelling, and stiffness in the joints. It usually affects the hands, wrists, and knees. RA happens when the immune system, which normally protects the body, starts attacking healthy joints by mistake.

2. What are the symptoms of RA?

- Joint pain and swelling: Often in hands, wrists, and knees.
- Stiffness: Especially in the morning or after sitting for a long time.
- Fatigue: Feeling very tired all the time.
- Fever: Sometimes a low fever.

3. What causes RA?

The exact cause of RA is unknown. It is thought to be a combination of genetic (family history) and environmental factors, like smoking or certain infections.

4. How is RA diagnosed?

Doctors diagnose RA through:

- Medical history and physical exam: Checking symptoms and family history.
- Blood tests: Looking for certain markers in the blood that are common in RA patients.
- Imaging tests: X-rays, MRI, or ultrasound to see the condition of the joints.

5. Is there a cure for RA?

There is no cure for RA, but treatments can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

6. What treatments are available?

- Medications: To reduce pain and swelling, slow the disease, and prevent joint damage.
- Physical therapy: Exercises to keep joints flexible and strong.
- Lifestyle changes: Healthy diet, regular exercise, and quitting smoking.
- Surgery: In severe cases, to repair or replace damaged joints.

7. Can I lead a normal life with RA?

Yes, with proper treatment and lifestyle changes, many people with RA live normal, active lives.

8. What can I do to manage my RA symptoms?

- Take medications as prescribed by your doctor.
- Stay active: Gentle exercises like walking or swimming can help.
- Eat a healthy diet: Include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
- Rest when needed: Listen to your body and don't overdo activities.
- Use hot and cold packs: To reduce pain and stiffness.
- Stay connected: Join a support group or talk to others with RA.

9. Can RA affect other parts of the body?

Yes, RA can affect other organs like the heart, lungs, and eyes. It is important to have regular check-ups with your doctor.

10. What should I tell my doctor during visits?

- Any new symptoms or changes in your condition.
- How your current treatments are working.
- Any side effects from medications.
- Any other health concerns you have.

11. Where can I find more information or support?

- Your doctor or rheumatologist.
- Support groups and online forums.
- Educational websites like the Arthritis Foundation.

12. What should I eat if I have Rheumatoid Arthritis?


There is no special 'RA diet,' but some foods may help reduce inflammation and improve joint health.

Eat more of:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Omega-3 fats (fish like salmon, flaxseeds, walnuts)
- Low-fat dairy (curd, milk)

Limit or avoid:

- Deep-fried and junk foods
- Sugary drinks and sweets
- Too much red meat
- Processed snacks and salty foods

 Maintain a healthy weight

Always talk to your doctor or dietitian before making big changes to your diet.