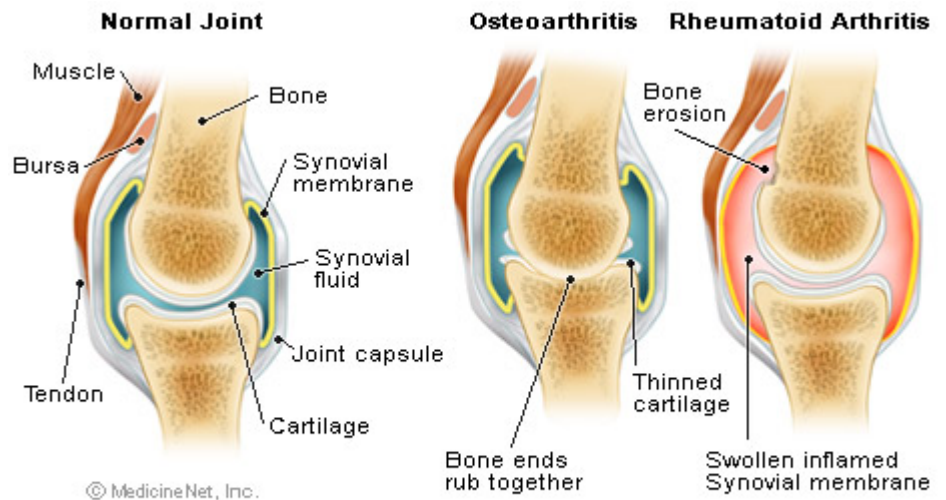


# Rheumatoid Arthritis

**Other names: RA**

Rheumatoid arthritis is characterized by joint pain and stiffness. It is an autoimmune disease that causes chronic inflammation of the joints and sometimes the tissue around the joints as well as other organs of the body. Autoimmune diseases are illnesses which occur when the body tissues are mistakenly attacked by its own immune system. People with autoimmune diseases have antibodies in their blood which target their own body tissue. Because RA can affect multiple other organs in the body, it is referred to as a systemic illness and is sometimes called rheumatoid disease.



## Normal and Arthritic Joints

Typically rheumatoid arthritis is a progressive illness that has the potential to cause joint destruction and functional disability. The joint inflammation of RA causes swelling, pain, stiffness, and redness in the joints. The inflammation can also occur in tissues around the joints, such as the tendons, ligaments, and muscles.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a common rheumatic disease, affecting more than two million people in the United States. It is three times more common in women as in men and afflicts people of all races equally.

### What causes rheumatoid arthritis?

The cause of rheumatoid arthritis is unknown. Even though infectious agents such as viruses, bacteria, and fungi have long been suspected, none has been proven as the cause. Some scientists believe that the tendency to develop RA may be genetically inherited. It is suspected that certain infections or factors in the environment might trigger the immune system to attack the body's own tissues, resulting in inflammation in various organs of the body.

Regardless of the exact trigger, the result is an immune system that is geared up to promote inflammation in the joints and occasionally other tissues of the body. Recently scientists have reported that smoking tobacco increased the risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis.

### What are the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis?

The symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis come and go, depending on the degree of tissue inflammation. When body tissues are inflamed, the disease is active. When tissue inflammation subsides, the disease is inactive (in remission). Remissions can occur spontaneously or with treatment, and can last weeks, months, or years. During remissions, symptoms of the disease disappear, and patients generally feel well. When the disease becomes active again (relapse), symptoms return. The return of disease activity and symptoms is called a flare. The course of rheumatoid arthritis varies from patient to patient, and periods of flares and remissions are typical.

When the disease is active, symptoms can include fatigue, lack of appetite, low grade fever, muscle and joint aches, and stiffness. Muscle and joint stiffness are usually most notable in the morning and after periods of inactivity. Arthritis is common during disease flares. During flares, joints frequently become red, swollen, painful, and tender. This occurs because the lining tissue of the joint (synovium) becomes inflamed, resulting in the production of excessive joint fluid (synovial fluid). The synovium also thickens with inflammation (synovitis). In rheumatoid arthritis, multiple joints are usually inflamed in a symmetrical pattern (both sides of the body affected). The small joints of both the hands and wrists are often involved. Simple tasks of daily living, such as turning door knobs and opening jars can become difficult during flares. The small joints of the feet are also commonly involved. Occasionally, only one joint is inflamed. When only one joint is involved, the arthritis can mimic the joint inflammation caused by other forms of arthritis such as gout or joint infection. Chronic

inflammation can cause damage to body tissues, cartilage and bone. This leads to a loss of cartilage and erosion and weakness of the bones as well as the muscles, resulting in joint deformity, destruction, and loss of function.

### How is rheumatoid arthritis treated?

There is no known cure for rheumatoid arthritis. To date, the goal of treatment in rheumatoid arthritis is to reduce joint inflammation and pain, maximize joint function, and prevent joint destruction and deformity. Early medical intervention has been shown to be important in improving outcomes. Aggressive management can improve function, stop damage to joints, and prevent work disability. Optimal treatment for the disease involves a combination of supplements, possible medications, rest, joint strengthening exercises, joint protection, and patient (and family) education. Treatment is customized according to many factors such as disease activity, types of joints involved, general health, age, and patient occupation. Treatment is most successful when there is close cooperation between the doctor, patient, and family members.

According to research and other evidence, the following self-care steps may be helpful in treating Rheumatoid Arthritis:

- ✓ **Exercise** – proper, regular, gentle exercise is important in maintaining joint mobility.
- ✓ **Limit fats** – animal fats may contribute to inflammation.
- ✓ **Try fish oil** – omega-3 fatty acids helps many people reduce pain.
- ✓ **Give vitamin E a try** – this vitamin can help ease symptoms.
- ✓ **Check for food allergies or sensitivities** – there may be certain foods that are making your arthritis worse.

### Recommended Lyflo Select products:

- ✓ **Joint Complex:** The glucosamine-chondroitin combination in Joint Complex helps restore joint cartilage, easing your pain and improving your mobility. It also helps support bone density and overall joint health making it easier to stay active. Joint complex also contains MSM and boron both proven to help ease pain and inflammation.
- ✓ **Inflammation Defense** contains an assortment of nutrients chosen for their ability to help reduce inflammation and is a natural alternative to prescription and over-the-counter anti-inflammatory drugs. Its main ingredient is Celadrin®, a stable naturally occurring fatty acid known to reduce inflammation. Not only will Inflammation Defense help with your joint pain it may also benefit cardiovascular health by reducing the inflammation that damages the linings of arteries and veins.
- ✓ **Topical Pain Crème** uses Celadrin® an all natural proprietary ingredient clinically proven to reduce pain and inflammation as well as rapidly promote joint health. Topical Pain Crème acts fast with deep penetration to the affected area to improve flexibility and mobility.
- ✓ **Omega Defense:** Several studies conclude that omega-3 fatty acid supplements reduce tenderness in joints, decrease morning stiffness, and in some cases allow for a reduction in the amount of medications needed for people with rheumatoid arthritis.
- ✓ **Multivitamin:** Maintaining health and feeling good becomes increasingly more complicated with a chronic disease like rheumatoid arthritis. A well balanced multivitamin is probably the single most important supplement you can take. Lyflo Select's Multivitamin contains high potency vitamins and minerals to promote optimum health. And being liquid, the nutrients are better absorbed by the body than most pill or tablet forms.

**References:** [Medicinenet.com](http://Medicinenet.com), [DrLam.com](http://DrLam.com), [Vitasearch.com](http://Vitasearch.com)

*The products and claims made about specific products have not been evaluated by Renutra Natural Health Products or the United States Food and Drug Administration and are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent disease. The information provided is for information purposes only. Copyright© 2006, Renutra Natural Health Products. All rights reserved.*