

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) “inflammation of a joint”; is a chronic inflammatory autoimmune disease in which your own immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissues, causing inflammation that damages your joints, resulting in chronic pain, loss of function and disability.

Causes of RA;

The cause of RA is unknown. The latest scientific findings suggest that RA may be caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, or hormonal factors.

And while there is no cure, it is easier than ever to control RA through the use of new drugs, exercise, joint protection techniques and self-management techniques.

Symptoms:

1. People with RA have joints that are tender, warm, and swollen. This occurs in a "symmetrical" pattern, meaning that if the left knee is affected, the right knee also is affected. Joints become spongy.
2. RA often affects the wrist and finger joints closest to the hand, but neck, shoulders, elbows, hips, knees, ankles, and feet also may be affected.
3. Morning stiffness is the classical sign of RA lasting for more than 30 -45 minutes, or after long rest and lack of activity.
4. Patients with RA also may experience fatigue, fever, or a general sense of not feeling well, weight loss, anemia, and lymph node enlargement.
5. Deformities of both hands and feet are common in RA, and in case of active inflammation, bony changes and limitation in function occur.

Treatment and prevention:

1. Treatment begins with education, a balance of rest and exercises to maintain and improve joint mobility and overall functional status.
2. Salicylates or NSAIDs, (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs).
3. Methotrexate is currently the standard treatment of RA if symptoms appear to be aggressive because of Methotrexate success in improving the disease symptoms.
4. Food high in Vitamins, proteins, and iron for tissue building and repair. Eating a healthy caloric restricted diet is also encouraged

