

#### References

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3. American College of Rheumatology. Rheumatoid arthritis: fast facts. Updated August 2013. <http://www.rheumatology.org/I-Am-A/Patient-Caregiver/Diseases-Conditions/Rheumatoid-Arthritis>. Accessed December 14, 2015.



## Understanding the Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

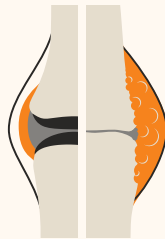


## What Is RA?

- RA is a long-term inflammatory disease that causes pain, stiffness, and swelling of the joints<sup>1,2</sup>
- RA can damage cartilage and bone<sup>1,2</sup>
- RA can affect almost any joint but most often affects the joints of the hands and feet<sup>2,3</sup>
- RA can also cause loss of energy, loss of appetite, low-grade fever, decreased range of motion, and lumps called rheumatoid nodules<sup>3</sup>
- Joint damage from RA can reduce your ability to do daily activities<sup>1</sup>



### A Healthy Joint and a Joint That Has Been Affected by RA



## Who Gets RA?

- About 1.3 million adult Americans have RA<sup>1</sup>
- Most of the time, RA develops between the ages of 35 and 50 years old<sup>1</sup>
- Women are up to 3 times more likely than men to have RA<sup>3</sup>

## What Are the Symptoms of RA?

- RA affects people in different ways<sup>2</sup>
- Joint pain may start slowly and get worse over many months or joint pain may flare up from time to time<sup>2</sup>
- The small joints in the hands and feet usually show symptoms of RA first<sup>2</sup>

## Signs and Symptoms of RA<sup>2,3</sup>

- Painful joints
- Swollen joints
- Stiffness in joints, particularly in the morning
- Low fever
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling weak
- Lumps under the skin of the hands or elbows
- Weight loss
- Decreased movement in joints

## Early Diagnosis and Treatment by a Rheumatologist Are Important

- Early and appropriate treatment are important to help slow the progression of joint damage<sup>1</sup>
- The first weeks and months following the onset of RA symptoms are considered the “window of opportunity,” and it is important to get treatment during this time<sup>1</sup>
- A rheumatologist is a doctor who is a specialist in diseases of the joints, muscles, and bones
- A rheumatologist is the best doctor for treating RA
- A rheumatologist can help you:
  - Determine if you have RA
  - Make a treatment plan that can help relieve joint pain, stiffness, and swelling
  - Understand the risks and benefits of your treatment options
  - Slow or prevent further joint damage



### **If You Think That You Have RA Symptoms, Don't Wait!**

Make an appointment with your health care provider to determine if you should see a rheumatologist.