

Frequently Asked Questions About Rheumatoid Arthritis and Psoriatic Arthritis

What are rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis?

- Rheumatoid arthritis (also called RA) and psoriatic arthritis (also called PsA) are inflammatory diseases that primarily affect the joints and can cause pain and irreversible joint damage.
- Joint pain from RA and PsA can result in loss of physical function and disability, impacting daily activity and quality of life.

What is the difference between RA and PsA?

- While RA and PsA are in the same family of inflammatory diseases, they are different.
- PsA is a type of inflammatory arthritis that is often seen in patients with the skin disease psoriasis.

How will the doctor determine if I have RA or PsA?

- First, your doctor will conduct a thorough physical examination of your joints and skin. Even if you have not complained of any skin problems, it is still important to examine your skin because psoriasis can sometimes be hidden in the scalp, under folds of skin, or in other areas of the body that are not obvious.
- Your doctors will draw blood to run a number of laboratory tests.
- He/she will take X-rays and/or do an ultrasound to get a better understanding of the joint damage and inflammation.

Will the pain and joint inflammation go away after a while?

- It is important to understand that the joint damage from RA and PsA can be stopped but cannot be reversed. Given this, it is important to be diagnosed and treated early to prevent the disability that comes with joint damage.
- There are several drugs that can stop the damage to your joints and also help with the pain of RA and PsA.

Telehealth Visits for RA and PsA

Telehealth visits are also becoming more common and are not that different from face-to-face visits with your doctor. There are a number of things you can do to prepare if you choose a telehealth visit:

- Select a comfortable and quiet space for your visit
- Be prepared to stand, sit, or move around so the doctor can see how you and your joints move during an examination
- Mention to your doctor other chronic conditions that you may have
- Prepare a list of any other medications you are taking
- Be sure to tell your doctor of any drug or food allergies you may have
- Make a list of questions to address all of your concerns during the telehealth visit. It's hard to remember everything!
- Keep a notebook nearby to write down information and recommendations your doctor shares for the management of RA or PsA



Partnering with Your Doctor to Choose a Medication That Is Right for You

YOU are an important member of the treatment team! Your care team may include your doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, PA, and pharmacist. Each of these health care providers plays an important role in your health care journey and is available to answer questions and assist you along the way. Open communication is very important!

As you are discussing treatment with your care team, there are a number of things that you should talk to your doctor about to make the best decisions about what medication to take. Some things to think about when preparing for the discussion:



- It is important that you talk with your doctor about how the disease is impacting your quality of life and what your goals are for treatment.
- Remember: patient preference in treatment is important! Discuss all options with your doctor.
 - For example, how would you like to take your medication? Some medications are taken as a pill while others are delivered by an injection or by going to an infusion center to have the medication administered. This is a conversation you should have with your doctor so that your preferences are factored into the decision.
- If you ARE taking any medications, including over-the-counter medications, homeopathic or herbal supplements, or vitamins, be sure to tell your care team. They can review your medication list to uncover potential drug interactions.
- Once you and your doctor decide on a medication that is right for you, keep a list of any side effects or of anything unusual that happens to you while you are taking your medication, such as rash, infection, stomach pain, or anything else that is of concern. Communicate any side effects with your care team.



You have taken the first step to become knowledgeable about your conditions in order to be an active participant in treatment decisions and in your care.

For more information about RA and PsA, visit
www.cmeoutfitters.com/rheumatology-digital-hub.