



Royal Berkshire  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Inflammatory Arthritis

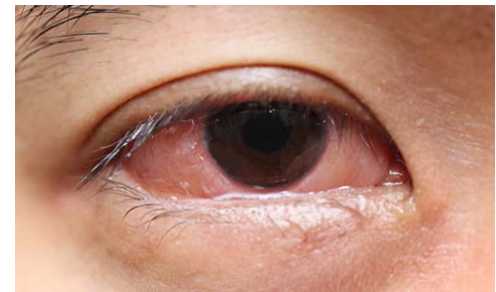
Welcome

# What is Inflammatory Arthritis?

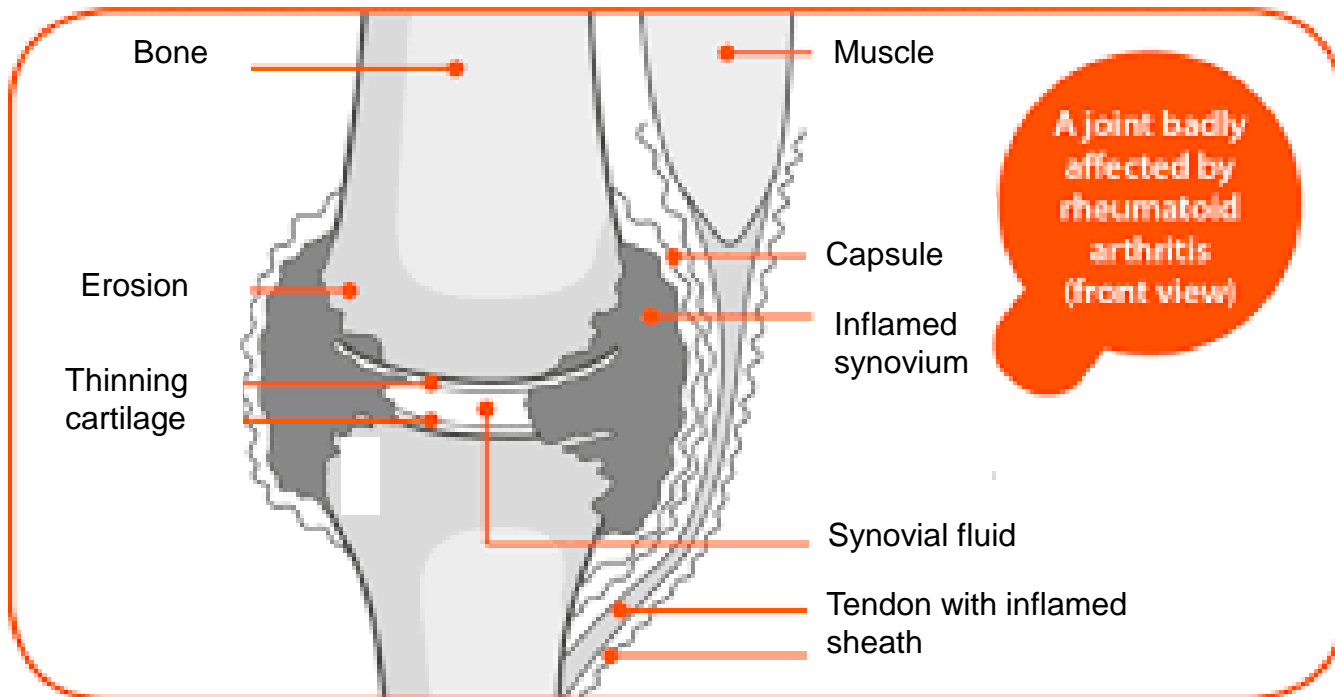
- ‘An autoimmune disease that causes inflammation in your joints’.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> most common form of arthritis in the UK
- ‘Seropositive’ or ‘Seronegative’
- Early treatment is key

## Common signs and symptoms

- Joint swelling
- Pain
- Stiffness-particularly first thing in the morning and after inactivity
- Fatigue
- Malaise
- Weight/muscle loss
- Inflammation of other areas of the body e.g. eyes
- Dry eyes/mouth
- Anaemia



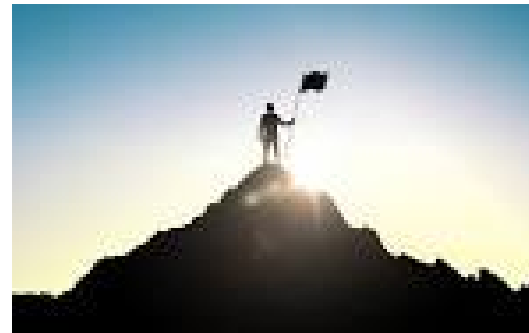
# If untreated/undertreated...



Courtesy of Arthritis Research UK

## Aims of treatment

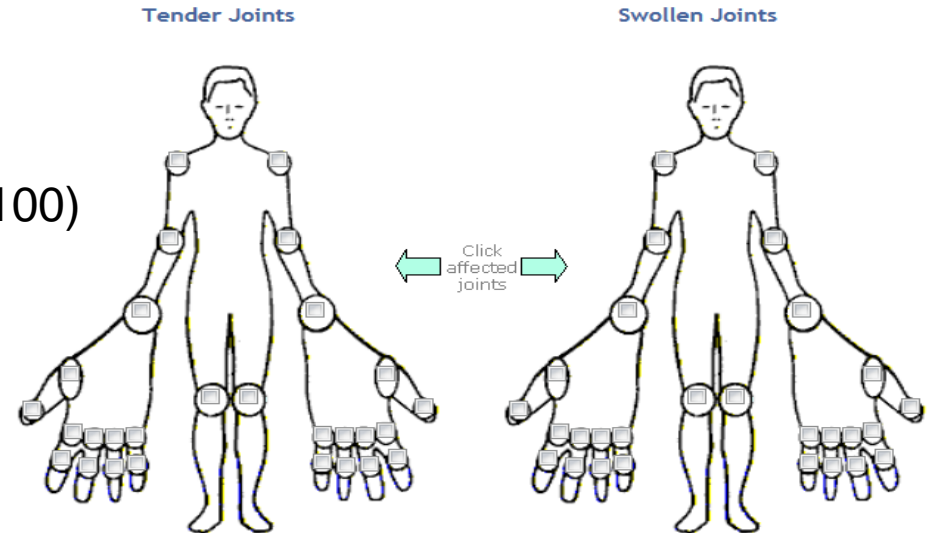
- To relieve pain, swelling and stiffness
- Manage fatigue
- Improve general function
- Prevent deformity and disability
- Achieve clinical remission



# Assessment of disease activity

‘Disease Activity Score’ in the 28 most commonly affected joints.

- A determining factor for medication changes
- Takes into account:
  - Tender joint count
  - Swollen joint count
  - Patient Global Assessment (0-100)
  - ESR/CRP



## DAS28

## Implication

**Less than 2.6**

Disease remission. Usually no action necessary except remain on current medication.

**2.6 to 3.2**

Low disease activity. May merit change in therapy for some patients

**3.2 to 5.1**

Moderate disease activity. May merit change in therapy for some patients unless mutually agreed to be the best outcome on current treatment

**More than 5.1**

Severe disease activity likely to require change in therapy. This is the current threshold for being considered for biologic treatment as per NICE guidelines<sup>3</sup>

# Treatment may include

- Medication
- Injections
- Exercise
- Self-management techniques
- Joint protection strategies



# Medication

## DMARDs

- examples

## Steroid

- Injection in to muscle (depomedrone)
- Tablets (prednisolone)
- Joint injection

## Biologics

## Blood monitoring

DAWN system (according to area)

- Red and white cells
- Inflammatory markers (CRP or ESR)
- Liver, kidney and some bone biochemistry
- Annual cholesterol and BP check



## Exercise

- Improves joint movement
- Strengthens muscles
- Lowers your cardiovascular risk
- Keeps your bones strong
- Weight control (less stress on joints)
- Improves function and mood
- Can help with pain relief



## Principles of exercise

– Improving mobility and flexibility:

1. Slow movement
2. Move as far as you can then nudge into the stiffness
3. Hold the stretch for a few seconds
4. Low repetitions (maximum of 5 in one go)



## Principles of exercise (cont.)

– Improving strength in the early stages:

1. Slow, controlled movement
2. Ensure you get to the end of the range
3. Low repetitions to begin with
4. Gradually increase resistance/weight beginning with low reps again



## Principles of exercise cont.

- Improving endurance:
  1. Ties in with fatigue management
  2. Gradual increase in activity



## Good ways to exercise

- Walking
- Exercises in water
- Cycling
- Tai Chi/Yoga/Pilates
- Anything you enjoy



# Specific exercises for your arthritis

1. Fingers, hands and wrists
2. Elbows and shoulders
3. Neck and jaw



## **Specific exercises for your arthritis**

4. Feet and ankles

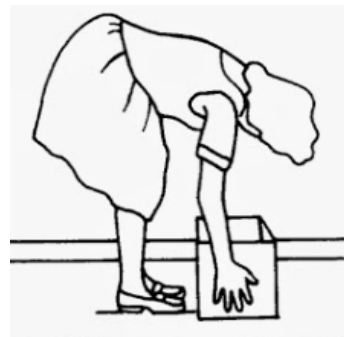
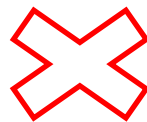
5. Knees and hips

6. Posture

# Comfort break

# Joint protection principles

- Use largest possible joint
- Distribute weight across multiple joints
- Reduce weight of tasks
- Use joints in good alignment
- Widen grips and change hand position regularly
- Adapt the way you do things and use ergonomic equipment if needed.



## Looking after your hands

- Gentle hand exercises to maintain movement
- Gentle strengthening e.g. putty or stress ball
- Splints:
  - Off the shelf and soft splints for function.
  - Occasionally thermoplastic resting splints are made.



# Fatigue

- What is fatigue?
- Causes
- Features of fatigue



# Fatigue management principles

The 4 P's:

- Pacing
  - Planning
  - Prioritising
  - Problem solving
- 
- Balance activity with rest.
  - Use diaries to monitor fatigue if needed.



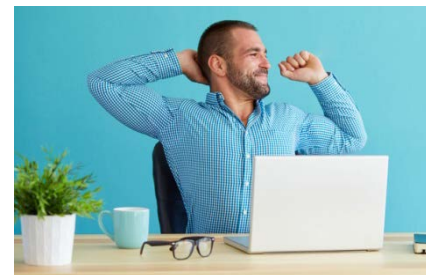
# Flare management

- Relative rest balanced with gentle activity
- Use adapted techniques or equipment
- Use cold pack on hot/swollen joints (care to be taken if you have Diabetes or circulatory problems)
- Use simple painkillers e.g. Paracetamol
- Phone GP if in doubt
- Rheumatology helpline 0118 322 6574



## Helpful tips and hints

- Footwear and insoles
- Use of heat/cold
- TENS
- Listen to your body
- Regular change of position for joints
- Healthy diet
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol
- Fit movement in to “wasted minutes”





## Going forwards

Continue prescribed medication

Complete blood tests on time

Attend your clinic appointments

Further review in physiotherapy or occupational therapy as required

Put in to practice all you have learnt today!



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# Further resources

- Versus Arthritis

[www.versusarthritis.org](http://www.versusarthritis.org)

0300 790 0400

- National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society

[www.nras.org.uk](http://www.nras.org.uk)

0800 298 7650