

for the child and family, including medications, physical and occupational therapy, ophthalmologic slit lamp examinations, splints, comfort measures, dietary management, school modifications, and psychosocial support.

Medications

In 2011, the American College of Rheumatology published recommendations for the treatment of JIA intended to lend guidance to the provider. The guidelines are divided into four groups: children with (1) four or fewer affected joints, (2) five or more affected joints, (3) systemic arthritis and active systemic features, and (4) systemic arthritis with active arthritis. Each path provides recommendations for a step-wise escalation of the medication and therapy ([Beukelman, Patkar, Saag, et al, 2011](#)). All tracks consider poor prognostic indicators, such as erosions on radiograph; arthritis of the hip, cervical spine, ankle or wrist; and a positive RF. Additionally, each track takes into account disease activity levels that include elevated acute phase reactants and global assessments of both the provider and the patient/parent.

Medications included in the guidelines include those described in the following sections.

Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs.

NSAIDs (e.g., naproxen and ibuprofen) are used alone or in combination with other drugs depending on the amount of disease activity and poor prognostic features. NSAIDs offer an analgesic effect but may require higher dosing for an antiinflammatory effect. Patient/parent education is important and should include potential side effects of gastrointestinal, renal, hepatic, and prolonged coagulation.

Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs.

Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) include non-biologic drugs, methotrexate and sulfasalazine. The decision to use a DMARD at initiation of therapy or later in the escalation of therapy is guided by the amount of disease activity and poor prognostic features. Effective against arthritis and uveitis, antirheumatic low-dose methotrexate has a time proven safety profile, but parents may be overwhelmed with the potential