



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → Infectious Arthritis

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/infectiousarthritis.html>

Infectious Arthritis

Also called: Septic arthritis

Most kinds of arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/arthritis.html>] cause pain and swelling in your joints. Joints are places where two bones meet, such as your elbow or knee. Infectious arthritis is an infection in the joint. The infection comes from a bacterial, viral, or fungal infection that spreads from another part of the body. Symptoms of infectious arthritis include:

- Intense pain in the joint
- Joint redness and swelling
- Chills and fever
- Inability to move the area with the infected joint





One type of infectious arthritis is reactive arthritis. The reaction is to an infection somewhere else in your body. The joint is usually the knee, ankle, or toe. Sometimes, reactive arthritis is set off by an infection in the bladder, or in the urethra, which carries urine out of the body. In women, an infection in the vagina can cause the reaction. For both men and women, it can start with bacteria passed on during sex. Another form of reactive arthritis starts with eating food or handling something that has bacteria on it.


To diagnose infectious arthritis, your health care provider may do tests of your blood, urine, and joint fluid. Treatment includes medicines and sometimes surgery.

Start Here

- Septic Arthritis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/bone-and-joint-infections/symptoms-causes/syc-20350755?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Diagnosis and Tests


- Bacteria Culture Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/bacteria-culture-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-cultivo-de-bacterias/>]
- Bone X-Ray [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/bonerad>]
 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/bonerad>]
- C-Reactive Protein (CRP) Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/c-reactive-protein-crp-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-proteina-c-reactiva-pcr/>]
- Complete Blood Count (CBC) [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/complete-blood-count-cbc/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/conteo-sanguineo-completo/>]
- Musculoskeletal MRI [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/muscmr>]
(American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/muscmr>]
- Overview of Reactive Arthritis [<https://spondylitis.org/about-spondylitis/overview-of-spondyloarthritis/reactive-arthritis/>]
(Spondylitis Association of America)

Synovial Fluid Analysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/synovial-fluid-analysis/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/analisis-del-liquido-sinovial/>]



Treatments and Therapies

- Joint Injections (Joint Aspirations) [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/joint-injections-joint-aspirations>]
(American College of Rheumatology)
Also in Spanish [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/inyecciones-aspiraciones-articulares>]

Specifics

- HCV and Rheumatic Disease [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/hcv-and-rheumatic-disease>]
(American College of Rheumatology)
Also in Spanish [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/el-virus-de-la-hepatitis-c-y-las-enfermedades-reumaticas>]
- What Is Reactive Arthritis? [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/reactive-arthritis>]
 **Easy-to-Read** (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/informacion-de-salud/artritis-reactiva>]

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Arthritis, Infectious [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Arthritis,+Infectious%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Arthritis, Reactive [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Arthritis,+Reactive%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Rapid bedside testing for septic arthritis: evaluating cost-effective diagnostic tools.
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40720468>]
- Article: Mendelian randomization analysis of C-reactive protein on septic arthritis risk.
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40696598>]
- Article: Septic arthritis score (SAS) - a novel clinical prediction model for... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40681984>]
- Infectious Arthritis -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Arthritis%2C+Infectious%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Arthritis Foundation: Local Office Directory [<https://www.arthritis.org/local-offices/>] (Arthritis Foundation)
- Find a Rheumatologist [<https://my.rheumatology.org/rheumatology-provider-directory>] (American College of Rheumatology)
- National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/>] 
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/es/portal-en-espanol>]

Children

- Arthrocentesis (Joint Aspiration) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/arthrocentesis.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/arthrocentesis.html>]

Patient Handouts

- Fungal arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000444.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000444.htm>]

- **HLA-B27 antigen** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003551.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003551.htm>]
- **Reactive arthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000440.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000440.htm>]
- **Septic arthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000430.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000430.htm>]
- **Viral arthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000416.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000416.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Fungal arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000444.htm>]
- Gonococcal arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000453.htm>]
- HLA-B27 antigen [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003551.htm>]
- Joint fluid culture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003742.htm>]
- Reactive arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000440.htm>]
- Septic arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000430.htm>]
- Viral arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000416.htm>]

Related Health Topics

- Arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/arthritis.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Infectious Arthritis* is the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases [<http://www.niams.nih.gov/>]

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>] .

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

