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

Arthritis

What is arthritis?

If you feel pain and stiffness in your body or have trouble moving around, you might have arthritis. Any disorder that affects the joints is often called arthritis. Joints are places where two bones meet, such as your elbow or knee.

Most types of arthritis can cause joint pain and inflammation (swelling). Over time, a swollen joint can become severely damaged. Some kinds of arthritis can also cause problems in your organs, such as your eyes or skin. Treatment will depend on the type of arthritis you have.

What are the types of arthritis?

Common types of arthritis include:

- **Osteoarthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/osteoarthritis.html>] is the most common type of arthritis. It's often related to aging or injury.
- **Autoimmune arthritis** happens when your body's immune system attacks healthy cells in your body by mistake. **Rheumatoid arthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/rheumatoidarthritis.html>] is the most common form of this type of arthritis.
- **Juvenile arthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/juvenilearthritis.html>] is a type of arthritis that happens in children.
- **Infectious arthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/infectiousarthritis.html>] is an infection that has spread from another part of your body to the joint. **Reactive arthritis** is one type.
- **Psoriatic arthritis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/psoriaticarthritis.html>] affects people with **psoriasis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/psoriasis.html>] (itchy or sore scaly red and white skin patches).
- **Gout** [<https://medlineplus.gov/gout.html>] is a painful type of arthritis that happens when too much uric acid builds up in your body. It often starts in the big toe. Other joints can also be affected.
- **Ankylosing spondylitis** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ankylosingspondylitis.html>] is a type of arthritis of the spine that can cause stiffness and make it difficult to move and bend.

What are the symptoms of arthritis?

Pain, redness, warmth, and joint inflammation are common arthritis symptoms. You may not be able to move your joint as well as it should. Other symptoms could include **fever** [<https://medlineplus.gov/fever.html>], weight loss, breathing difficulties, or a rash.

Symptoms often get worse as you age. Some symptoms of arthritis may be signs of other illnesses.

Who is more likely to get arthritis?

A few things that might increase your chance of getting arthritis include:

- **Family history.** You may be more likely to get certain types of arthritis if a member of your family has the disorder.
- **Age.** The risk of getting many types of arthritis increases with age.
- **Sex.** Certain types of arthritis are more common in women, while other types are more common in men.

Other factors that might increase your risk of getting arthritis include having a previous joint injury, **obesity** [<https://medlineplus.gov/obesity.html>], or **lupus** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lupus.html>].

How is arthritis diagnosed?

To find out if you have arthritis, your health care provider may:

- Ask you about your medical history, including your symptoms.
- Do a physical exam.
- Order blood tests or take x-rays [<https://medlineplus.gov/xrays.html>].

Your provider may refer you to a rheumatologist (a doctor who specializes in arthritis care) for tests, diagnosis, and care.

What are the treatments for arthritis?

Treatment depends on the type of arthritis you have. It may include medicine or surgery. Your provider will work with you to improve your symptoms and quality of life.

A few ways to help manage your symptoms include:

- Hot or cold packs
- Relaxation techniques
- Use of splints, braces, and/or assistive devices [<https://medlineplus.gov/assistivedevices.html>]

NIH: National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases

Start Here

- Arthritis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/arthritis/symptoms-causes/syc-20350772?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/arthritis/symptoms-causes/syc-20350772?p=1>]
- Arthritis and Rheumatic Diseases [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/arthritis-and-rheumatic-diseases>]  (National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases)
- Arthritis Basics [<https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Diagnosis and Tests

- 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/>]
- Direct Arthrography [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/arthrog>]  (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/arthrog>]
- 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>]
- 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

- Arthritis Pain: Treatments Absorbed through Your Skin [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/osteoarthritis/in-depth/pain-medications/ART-20045899?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/osteoarthritis/in-depth/pain-medications/art-20045899?p=1>]
- 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>]

Living With

- About Physical Activity and Arthritis [<https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/prevention/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Arthritis [<https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/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/arthritis>]
- Arthritis Pain: Do's and Don'ts [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/arthritis/in-depth/arthritis/ART-20046440?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/arthritis/in-depth/arthritis/art-20046440?p=1>]

Related Issues

- Employees with Arthritis [<https://askjan.org/disabilities/Arthritis.cfm?>] (Office of Disability Employment Policy)
- HIV and Rheumatic Disease [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/hiv-and-rheumatic-disease>] (American College of Rheumatology)
Also in Spanish [<https://rheumatology.org/patients/el-vih-y-las-enfermedades-reumaticas>]
- Sex and Arthritis [<https://rheumatology.org/sex-and-arthritis>] (American College of Rheumatology)
Also in Spanish [<https://rheumatology.org/sexo-y-artritis>]

Specifics

- Adult Still's Disease [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/adult-stills-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20351907?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Arthritis of the Hand [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/arthritis-of-the-hand/>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)
- Arthritis of the Shoulder [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/arthritis-of-the-shoulder>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)
Also in Spanish [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/es/diseases--conditions/arthritis-del-hombro-arthritis-of-the-shoulder/>]
- Arthritis of the Thumb [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/arthritis-of-the-thumb/>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)
- Arthritis of the Wrist [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/arthritis-of-the-wrist/>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)
- Inflammatory Arthritis of the Hip [<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/inflammatory-arthritis-of-the-hip>] (American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons)
- Overview of Enteropathic Arthritis / Arthritis Associated with Inflammatory Bowel Disease [<https://spondylitis.org/about-spondylitis/overview-of-spondyloarthritis/enteropathic-arthritis/>] (Spondylitis Association of America)
- Thumb Arthritis [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/thumb-arthritis/symptoms-causes/syc-20378339?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/thumb-arthritis/symptoms-causes/syc-20378339?p=1>]

Genetics

- Blau syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/blau-syndrome>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Genetics and Rheumatic Disease [<https://rheumatology.org/genetics-rheumatic-diseases>] (American College of Rheumatology)
Also in Spanish [<https://rheumatology.org/la-genetica-y-las-enfermedades-reumaticas>]

Test Your Knowledge

- Osteoarthritis and Activity Quiz [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/quiz/000377_23.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/quiz/000377_83.htm]

Statistics and Research

- Arthritis by the Numbers: Book of Trusted Facts and Figures [<https://www.arthritis.org/getmedia/73a9f02d-7f91-4084-91c3-0ed0b11c5814/abtn-2020-final.pdf>] (Arthritis Foundation) - **PDF**
- FastStats: Arthritis [<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/arthritis.htm>] (National Center for Health Statistics)

Clinical Trials

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

Journal Articles

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

- Article: Linking serum neurofilament light chain to arthritis: Insights from a national... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40725940>]
- Article: Machine learning differentiation of rheumatoid arthritis-Sjögren's syndrome overlap from Sjögren's syndrome... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40698089>]
- Article: Blocking the IL-6 pathway to treat immune checkpoint inhibitor-induced inflammatory arthritis... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40641138>]
- Arthritis -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Arthritis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%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>]

Patient Handouts

- Arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001243.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001243.htm>]
- Osteotomy of the knee [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007499.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007499.htm>]
- Stay active and exercise when you have arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000377.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000377.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Adult Still disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000450.htm>]

Anterior knee pain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000452.htm>]

Arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001243.htm>]

C-reactive protein [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003356.htm>]

ESR [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003638.htm>]

Joint fluid Gram stain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003743.htm>]

Joint x-ray [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003810.htm>]

Osteotomy of the knee [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007499.htm>]

Stay active and exercise when you have arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/patientinstructions/000377.htm>]

Toxic synovitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000981.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Gout [<https://medlineplus.gov/gout.html>]

Infectious Arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/infectiousarthritis.html>]

Juvenile Arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/juvenilearthritis.html>]

Osteoarthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/osteoarthritis.html>]

Psoriatic Arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/psoriaticarthritis.html>]

Rheumatoid Arthritis [<https://medlineplus.gov/rheumatoidarthritis.html>]

National Institutes of Health

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

Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/arthritis.html>] on *Arthritis*

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