

## RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS CAUSES DIAGNOSIS AND PERIODS

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**Annotation:** Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic systemic autoimmune inflammatory disease of connective tissues, which manifests itself mainly in the form of erosive-destructive polyarthritis with exacerbation of peripheral joints.

**Key words:** Rheumatoid arthritis RA, inflammation, pain, autoimmune inflammation, ESR.

### **Reasons:**

In a healthy person, the immune system fights off invaders such as bacteria and viruses. With an autoimmune disease like RA, the immune system mistakes the body's cells for foreign substances and releases inflammatory chemicals that attack those cells. RA attacks the synovial membrane, the tissue around the joint that produces fluid that helps the joint move smoothly. The inflamed synovium thickens and makes the joint area feel painful and tender, appear red and swollen, and the joint may be difficult to move.

Researchers aren't sure why people develop RA. They believe that these individuals may have genes that are activated by an environmental trigger such as a virus or bacteria, physical or emotional stress, or other external factors.

### **- Symptoms:**

- In the early stages, people with RA do not experience redness or swelling in their joints, but they may experience tenderness and pain.
- Joint pain, tenderness, swelling, or stiffness that lasts six weeks or more.
- Morning sickness that lasts 30 minutes or more.
- Multiple joints are affected.
- Small joints (wrist, hand and some joints of the feet) are usually affected first.
- Symmetrical joints on both sides of the body are affected.
- Many people with RA feel very tired (fatigue), and some may have a low-grade fever. RA symptoms may come and go. The activity may last several days or months.
- Eyes: Dryness, pain, inflammation, redness, sensitivity to light and problems with proper vision.
- Mouth: Dryness and inflammation of the gums, itching or infection.
- Skin: Rheumatoid nodules are small lumps under the skin over bony areas.
- Lungs: Inflammation and scarring that can lead to shortness of breath and lung disease.

- Blood vessels: Inflammation of blood vessels that can cause damage to nerves, skin and other organs.
- Blood: The number of red blood cells is less than normal.
- Heart: Inflammation can damage the heart muscle and the area around it.
- Painful joints also make it difficult to exercise, which leads to weight gain. Being overweight can cause people with RA to develop high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

### **Diagnosis:**

Getting an accurate diagnosis as soon as possible is the first step to effective RA treatment. The best way to make an accurate diagnosis is to use a history, physical examination, and laboratory tests.

**Medical history:** Symptoms of the patient's joints (pain, tenderness, numbness, difficulty moving), when they start, come and go, how bad they are, what activities make them better or worse, family members with RA or other asks if you have an autoimmune disease.

**Physical exam:** The doctor will look for joint tenderness, swelling, warmth and painful or limited movement, nodules under the skin, or a low-grade fever.

**Blood tests.** Blood tests look for inflammation and blood proteins (antibodies) associated with RA:

Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR or "sed rate") and C-reactive protein (CRP) levels are markers of inflammation. Elevated ESR or CRP in combination with other markers can help diagnose RA.

Rheumatoid factor (RF) is an antibody found (eventually) in about 80 percent of people with RA. Antibodies to cyclic citrullinated peptide (CCP) are found in 60-70% of people with RA. However, they also occur in people without RA. RA can cause the peripheral parts of the bones inside the joint to wear away (erosion). An X-ray, ultrasound, or MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan can look for erosions. But if they don't show up in the first tests, it may mean that RA is at an early stage and hasn't yet damaged the bones. Imaging results can also show how well the treatment is working.

**Summary:** RA is a chronic disease that affects the body's skeletal muscles. Timely detection of these processes in the body ensures that the body is in balance. The body is examined every month and, depending on the conclusions, is placed in rehabilitation and inpatient conditions.

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