

Different Types of Arthritis

It may be hard to believe, but there are actually more than 100 different forms of arthritis and related diseases. You are probably aware of the most common types: osteoarthritis (OA), and rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Other types that you may be aware of include psoriatic arthritis (PsA), fibromyalgia and gout. Arthritis and related diseases can cause debilitating, life-changing pain and disability. Studies report that more than one-third of adults who

have arthritis report that it limits their work and leisure activities and 25% of them say it causes severe pain (seven or higher on a scale of zero to 10).

It would be impossible to list and discuss all forms of arthritis. This briefly highlights the differences between the most common types of arthritis.

Type of arthritis	Common signs and symptoms	Risk factors and/or causes	Treatment and management
Osteoarthritis (OA) ● The most common type ● Degenerative disease affects the whole joint, the protective cartilage and the fluid in the joint ● Most often affects weight-bearing joints like hips and knees	● Joint pain and stiffness ● Swelling (not always) ● Restricted range of movement ● Morning stiffness that eases off with movement/activity	● Primary OA: wear and tear/overuse of the joint ● Secondary OA: following an injury involving the joint ● Being overweight ● Family history of the condition	● Exercise therapy to strengthen the joints and surrounding muscles ● Pharmacological medication and ointments for symptomatic relief from pain and swelling ● No disease-modifying drug ● Bracing, heat, cold, orthotics ● Physical therapy ● Weight loss ● Surgical intervention or joint replacement



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Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) ● Most disabling type of arthritis ● Affect organs as well as joints ● Autoimmune disease ● Dysfunction in body's immune system, and overactive inflammatory response starts to attack joint cells and tissues	● Morning stiffness that persists over an hour after waking ● Affects bilateral/parallel joints – both left and right sides ● Swelling in same joints on both sides, eg. both hands, both thumbs ● Swelling in 3 or more joints ● Chronic Pain ● Deformity ● Joints are tender red and warm ● Affects organs including liver, heart and eyes	● Exact cause is not known ● Risk factors include chronic swelling of joint membranes ● Commonly have flare ups and then periods of 'remission'	● Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) ● Joint support with bracing and orthotics ● Physical therapy ● Exercise therapy ● Lifestyle modification education ● Education of coping mechanisms for chronic pain ● Pacing strategy

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Psoriatic arthritis (PsA) ● Autoimmune, inflammatory disease ● Immune system attacks cells of the skin and joints	● Skin rashes ● Pain ● Red or silver scaly skin ● Skin can be itchy and painful, dry and cracked ● Affect any joint, tendon or ligament		● DMARDs and biological therapeutics ● Pharmaceutical medication for symptom relief ● Dermatology treatment

Type of arthritis	Common signs and symptoms	Risk factors and/or causes	Treatment and management
Fibromyalgia			
● Dysfunction of the central nervous system (CNS) ● Thought that CNS pain signals are amplified in these patients	● Widespread chronic pain ● Fatigue ● Disturbed sleep ● Inability to concentrate ● Stress and anxiety ● Depression	● Not fully understood what cause is ● Possibly past injury with persistent pain	● Drugs that target neurochemicals ● Exercise therapy ● Lifestyle modification ● Education on coping mechanisms, pacing and chronic pain

Type of arthritis	Common signs and symptoms	Risk factors and/or causes	Treatment and management
Gout			
● Localised inflammatory arthritis ● Crystal formation in the joint section of the central nervous system (CNS)	● Pain ● Red, hot inflamed joint ● Often big toe on the foot	● High levels of uric acid (hyperuricemia) ● Triggered by some foods and alcohol ● Common in men over age of 30 ● Less common in women, usually only after menopause	● Anti-inflammatory drugs, steroids ● Anti-gout drug called colchicine ● Monitor lifestyle and diet ● Drink plenty of water and avoid purine-rich foods

Type of arthritis	Common signs and symptoms	Risk factors and/or causes	Treatment and management
Lupus			
● Also called systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) ● Complex autoimmune inflammatory disease	● Fever ● Affects joints, kidneys, skin, blood, brain and other organs ● Joint pain ● Headache ● Chest pain ● Fatigue ● Hair loss ● Sensitivity to light, fever, rash and kidney problems ● Weight loss ● Seizures		● DMARDs and anti-inflammatories, steroids ● Immunosuppressant drugs

Type of arthritis	Common signs and symptoms	Risk factors and/or causes	Treatment and management
Ankylosing spondylitis			
● Inflammation of the vertebra leading to new bone formation, fusing bone	● Stiff backbone ● Low back pain ● Stiff bent posture ● Breathing problems ● Swelling of the iris of the eye ● Joints in the spine start growing together ● Chronic pain	● Affects young men (more than women) aged 15 to 45 years old ● Family history of the disease ● Exact cause not know, has been linked to inflammatory bowel disease	● Pharmacological medication for symptom control ● Exercise therapy ● Physical therapy

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