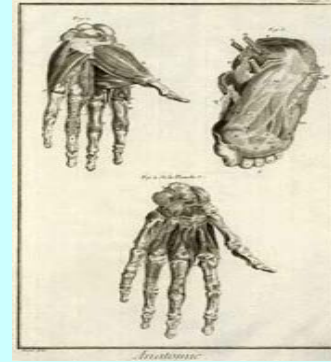


# RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS



## What is RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS?

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease which causes inflammation, mostly in the joints of the fingers, feet, wrists, elbows, ankles and knees. 1%-2% of adults are affected, mostly women. It is most common after age 30, affecting 5% of 70 year olds and older.

## What medications are used for RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS?

The most common medications used to treat **RA** are **non-steroidal anti-inflammatories** such as aspirin and Ibuprofen-like drugs, **steroids** such as prednisone, **chemotherapy drugs** like Methotrexate, gold, and some **immunosuppressants**. Ask your health care provider which medications are right for you.

## How do the medications work?

**Aspirin, Ibuprofen and other anti-inflammatory medicines** work to stop the inflammatory process which makes joints hot, swollen and tender. Most of the medications are taken in pill form, but some, like gold, can be given intravenously or injected. **Steroids** like

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prednisone work against the body's immune system to stop or slow down the body from attacking itself.

**Chemotherapy drugs like Methotrexate** help reduce the inflammatory process by interfering with chemicals in the body. **Gold** helps to slow down the effects on bones like deformities and nodule formation. **Other Immune suppressants such as Ciclosporin, Azathioprine and Cyclophosphamide** work to suppress the body's immune response to prevent the inflammation.

### **Is there a cure for RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS?**

No, there is no known cure. **RA** is unpredictable and varies from person to person. Some people have flares and remissions, while some progress in their disease. Damage to the body structures happens over years. Control of the disease with medications and rest can greatly slow the progression and severity of the disease.

#### References

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