

German League against Rheumatism: We are there for you

Rheumatoid Arthritis
is a rheumatic illness.
We know a lot about it.
We would gladly like to advise
and help you.

We can for example help you
to learn special gymnastic exercises.
You will meet
many other people
with rheumatism,
with whom you can share
mutual experiences.

To learn more
give us a call: **01804 60 00 00***
Or visit our website:
www.rheuma-liga.de

What helps with Rheumatoid Arthritis?

First the Doctor prescribes
a special medication.
It can delay
the destruction of the joints.
Usually the medication
that is prescribed
is called methotrexate.
It usually takes four to six weeks
until it starts to work.

During this time
the Doctor will give you
other medications
for the pain and inflammation.
This can be cortisone.
Or pain medication that treats both
the inflammation and the pain.
These medications are called
ibuprofen or diclofenac.

Sometimes medications such as
methotrexate do not work.
Then the Doctor can prescribe
another medication
that delays the destruction of the joints.

At the same time it is very important
to exercise the joints as much as possible,
in spite of the pain.
Helpful exercises are, for example,
special gymnastic exercises.

To protect joints there are special aids.
For example: forks and spoons
with thicker handles are easier to use
than ones with thinner handles.
That is why there are
thick handle covers
that are slipped onto
standard forks and spoons.

SHORT & TO THE POINT

Rheumatoid Arthritis



The most important information
about your illness,
summarized for easy understanding.



**Your Doctor told you
that you have Rheumatoid Arthritis.
Here is some information for you
to better understand this illness.**

Rheumatoid Arthritis – What is it?

With Rheumatoid Arthritis
usually several joints
are inflamed at the same time.
They hurt and are swollen.
Sometimes internal organs
are also inflamed,
for example the lungs or the heart.

Where does the pain come from?

The inside of the joints is covered
with a membrane.
And if you have Rheumatoid Arthritis
the membrane is inflamed.
What causes the inflammation
is not yet known.
The inflamed joint membrane
starts to grow quickly
and becomes bigger and bigger.
It eats little holes
into the cartilage and into the bones.
The cartilage is a layer
that covers each joint to protect it.

In addition, lots of fluid
forms inside of the joints.
This causes the joints to swell.
They hurt, are warm to the touch
and do not work right anymore.

Smokers get sicker
than non-smokers.
That is why it is important
for people with Rheumatoid Arthritis
to stop smoking.

Rheumatoid Arthritis
usually starts with pain
and swelling in the finger joints
or in the toe joints.

Typically joints are stiff
in the morning after you wake up.
They hurt very badly
and are very hard to move.
This can last several hours.

Tiredness, weakness, fever
or heavy sweating at night
can also happen.
Because your whole body
is fighting the inflammation.

During the course of weeks or months
more and more joints
can become inflamed.
The illness occurs in stages.
This means that the joints can really hurt
from time to time
and that you can feel really sick.
Then you are better for a while.

It is important to understand
that the inflammation
can damage the joints.
The damage can be so bad,
that the joints
can be completely destroyed.
That is why treatment should start
as quickly as possible.