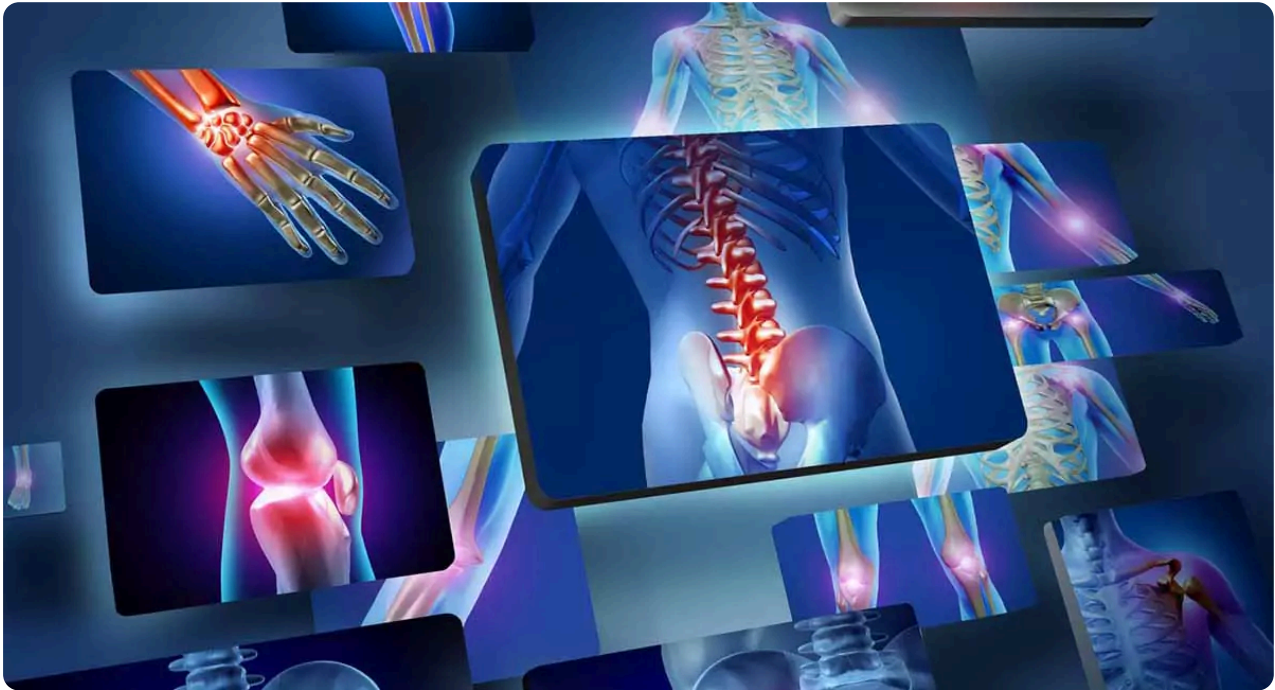


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## Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) in Dubai, UAE



**Rheumatoid arthritis** is a disease characterized by pain and swelling (inflammation) in and around joints, stiffness in the joints and muscles which is more apparent in the morning and fatigue. It is a systemic disease, meaning it can affect the whole body for example, the lungs, skin, blood vessels, nerves, and eyes. The disease tends to be chronic; hence it can last a long time. However, periods of freedom from symptoms may occur.

### **Who Gets Rheumatoid Arthritis?**

Anyone, at any age, can get rheumatoid arthritis. Most commonly it appears between the ages of 25 and 50. Women are affected about 3 times as frequently as men. Rheumatoid arthritis may also occur in children.

### **What Causes Rheumatoid Arthritis?**

The precise cause of rheumatoid arthritis is not yet known. We know that the inflammation in rheumatoid arthritis appears to be due to a vitamin or any other dietary elements such as fats, sugars, acids or metals faulty absorption or elimination of substances from the bowel infection in the internal organs of the body.

### **What Happens in Rheumatoid Arthritis in Dubai, UAE?**

Early in the disease, most people complain of fatigue, stiffness and aching in the joints which are worse in the morning. Some of the joints gradually become warm, painful, and swollen. Swelling of the joint is partly due to increased fluid in the joint cavity and partly due to the thickening of the lining of the joint capsule. Pain and swelling may occur in the same joints on both sides of the body and will usually start in the hands or feet. Rheumatoid arthritis tends to affect the wrist and many of the hand joints, but usually not the joints that are closest to the fingernails (except the thumb). It also affects elbows, [shoulders](#), neck, knees, hips, and ankles. It tends to persist over prolonged periods of time, and over time, inflamed

### **Rheumatoid Arthritis Diagnosis in Dubai, UAE**

It is important to diagnose rheumatoid arthritis early in the course of the disease because, with the use of disease-modifying drugs, the condition can be controlled in many cases. The diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis may require several visits to the doctor over a period of time. You will be asked questions about your symptoms. The doctor will perform a physical examination, looking at and inspecting joints for signs of inflammation or other problems. The diagnosis will be based on the overall pattern of the symptoms, physical examination, laboratory tests and x-rays.

### **Is There Any Effective Treatment for Rheumatoid Arthritis?**

YES. Treatment involves a combination of medication, rest, exercise and methods of protecting the joints. The purpose of treatment is to prevent joint damage and restore mobility and function.

### **Medication**

Highly effective drug treatments exist for rheumatoid arthritis. Early treatment is critical. Current treatment methods focus on relieving pain, reducing inflammation, stopping or slowing joint damage, and improving patient function and well-being. Medications can be divided into two groups: Symptomatic medications, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and

analgesics. This helps reduce joint pain, stiffness, and swelling. These drugs may be used in combination. Disease-modifying agents, such as methotrexate, sulfasalazine, hydroxychloroquine, Newer agents include leflunomide and biologic agents like anti-tumor necrosis factor inhibitors (anti-TNF) and IL-1 receptor antagonists These agents may alter the disease course and therefore improve long term outcomes. Your doctor may also decide to start you on corticosteroids, which are drugs related to the natural hormone cortisone. These medications can be given either orally (by mouth) or by an injection into the joint.

### **Exercise**

Appropriate and regular exercises are essential to strengthen muscles weakened by disease. Rheumatoid arthritis often makes joints stiff and restricts their motion if they aren't used regularly. Exercises are designed to meet the needs of each patient and should be monitored by professionals specializing in physical medicine (physiotherapists). Do not exercise vigorously if your joints are swollen or inflamed. Heat and Cold Treatment. Heat and cold treatment are effective means of relaxing muscles and relieving pain in arthritic joints. A hot bath, hot pads, paraffin wax, and cold compresses are some methods frequently used.

### **Adequate Rest**

Rest decreases the swelling and pain around inflamed joints and reduces fatigue, no special diet causes or cures rheumatoid arthritis. Nevertheless, a well-balanced and nutritious diet is beneficial. If you are overweight, a diet to reduce weight will reduce stress on affected joints.

### **What is the Outlook for Patients?**

Rheumatoid arthritis can be mild, moderate, or severe. For most people who begin to follow a proper treatment program early in their illness, the amount of permanent joint damage is small. In fact, most of the disabilities due to rheumatoid arthritis are preventable. Most patients with rheumatoid arthritis can look to the future with confidence.

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#### **If You Have Rheumatoid Arthritis**

- 1. SEEK a doctor's advice early and follow the advice faithfully.**

An early diagnosis is the way to successful treatment.

- 2. AVOID unnecessary strains on affected joints.**

- 3. Follow a program of exercise**

Prescribed by your team of doctors, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists.

- 4. GET adequate rest and sleep.**

- 5. BEWARE of any individual or organization that promotes special «cures». Do not rely on unproven remedies in the hope that the disease will go away.**

- 6. DO NOT Be afraid of arthritis. Handled by a physician, arthritis can be controlled.**

- 7. TAKE medications as advised by your doctor.**

- 8. Never change dosage or medications without your doctor's knowledge**

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