



Yelm Family  
Medicine Patient  
Newsletter

Committed to your health and our community

July is Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

That's right, kids get arthritis. It is a common misconception that only "old" people are afflicted with arthritis. Nearly 300,000 children in America have been diagnosed with juvenile arthritis.

**What is Juvenile Arthritis?**

Juvenile arthritis (JA) is not a disease in itself. Also known as pediatric rheumatic disease, JA is an umbrella term used to describe the many autoimmune and inflammatory conditions or pediatric rheumatic diseases that can develop in children under the age of 16. Juvenile arthritis affects nearly 300,000 children in the United States.

**Types of Juvenile Arthritis**

**Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA).** Considered the most common form of arthritis, JIA includes six subtypes: oligo arthritis, polyarthritis, systemic, enthesitis-related, juvenile psoriatic arthritis or undifferentiated.

**Juvenile dermatomyositis.** An inflammatory disease, juvenile dermatomyositis causes muscle weakness and a skin rash on the eyelids and knuckles.

**Juvenile lupus.** Lupus is an autoimmune disease. The most common form is systemic lupus erythematosus, or SLE. Lupus can affect the joints, skin, kidneys, blood and other areas of the body.

IN THIS ISSUE

WE WILL BE CLOSED  
TUESDAY, JULY 4<sup>TH</sup>. WE  
WILL REOPEN  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 5<sup>TH</sup> AT 9  
AM. HAVE A SAFE AND FUN  
HOLIDAY.



### **Juvenile scleroderma.**

Scleroderma, which literally means “hard skin,” describes a group of conditions that causes the skin to tighten and harden.

**Kawasaki disease.** This disease causes blood-vessel inflammation that can lead to heart complications.

### **Mixed connective tissue disease.**

This disease may include features of arthritis, lupus dermatomyositis and scleroderma, and is associated with very high levels of a particular antinuclear antibody called anti-RNP.

**Fibromyalgia.** This chronic pain syndrome is an arthritis-related condition, which can cause stiffness and aching, along with fatigue, disrupted sleep and other symptoms. More common in girls, fibromyalgia is seldom diagnosed before puberty.

### **Juvenile Arthritis Causes**

No known cause has been pinpointed for most forms of juvenile arthritis, nor is there evidence to suggest that toxins, foods or allergies cause children to develop JA. Some research points

toward a genetic predisposition to juvenile arthritis, which means the combination of genes a child receives from his or her parents may cause the onset of JA when triggered by other factors.

### **Juvenile Arthritis Symptoms**

Each of the different types of JA have their own set of signs and symptoms. You can read more specifics about the diseases by following the links above, and by visiting the Arthritis Foundation’s website dedicated to pediatric rheumatic diseases,

[KidsGetArthritisToo.](#)

### **Juvenile Arthritis Diagnosis**

The most important step in properly treating juvenile arthritis is getting an accurate diagnosis. The diagnostic process can be long and detailed. There is no single blood test that confirms any type of JA. In children, the key to diagnosis is a careful physical exam, along with a thorough medical history. Any specific tests a doctor may perform will depend upon the type of JA suspected.

### **Juvenile Arthritis Treatment**

Unfortunately, there is no cure for juvenile arthritis, although with early diagnosis and aggressive treatment, remission is possible. The goal of treatment is to relieve inflammation, control pain and improve the child’s quality of life. Most treatment plans involve a combination of medication, physical activity, eye care and healthy eating.

### **Juvenile Arthritis Self Care**

An important part of JA treatment is teaching the child the importance of how to follow the treatment prescribed by the healthcare team. Self-care also involves helping the child address the emotional and social effects of the disease. Self-management encompasses the choices made each day to live well and stay healthy and happy.

### **Juvenile Arthritis & the Arthritis Foundation**

The Arthritis Foundation understands the needs of families with juvenile arthritis are unique and pressing. Learn more about our research efforts through our work with CARRA and our involvement in PARTNERS.