

Rheumatoid arthritis occurs when your immune system mistakenly attacks your own body's tissues. Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory disorder that can affect more than just your joints. In some people, the condition can damage a wide variety of body systems, including the skin, eyes, lungs, heart and blood vessels.

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis may include:

- Tender, warm, swollen joints
- Joint stiffness that is usually worse in the mornings and after inactivity
- Fatigue, fever and loss of appetite

Rheumatoid arthritis signs and symptoms may vary in severity and may even come and go. Periods of increased disease activity, called flares, alternate with periods of relative remission — when the swelling and pain fade or disappear. Over time, rheumatoid arthritis can cause joints to deform and shift out of place.

Complications

Rheumatoid arthritis increases your risk of developing:

- Osteoporosis
- Rheumatoid Nodules
- Dry Eyes and Mouth
- Infections
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Heart Problems
- Lung Disease
- Lymphoma



Treatment

There is no cure for rheumatoid arthritis. But clinical studies indicate that remission of symptoms is more likely when treatment begins early with medications known as disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs). Treatment options include:

- Medications
- Therapy
- Surgery