

What is juvenile arthritis?

Arthritis is a condition that affects people of all ages. Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), also known as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA), is the most common form of arthritis in children and adolescents.

1 in 1,000

children develop some type of juvenile arthritis. These disorders can affect children at any age, although rarely in the first six months of life.



Symptoms

JIA is never the same from one child to the next.

Symptoms may come and go, or may be continuous. They may occur first in one joint, then involve other joints.

- morning joint stiffness, improved with activity
- joint swelling
- excessive clumsiness
- limping (knees are the most commonly affected joints in JIA)
- difficulty writing or opening bottles because of joint pain

2-3 years old

The most prevalent form of JIA peaks between 2 and 3 years of age.

In children who have a certain genetic predisposition to autoimmune disease, changes in the environment (if the child gets sick) may trigger the disease.



Diagnosis & Treatment

An early and accurate diagnosis is key to effectively managing JIA. To diagnose JIA, the doctor will take a detailed medical history and conduct a thorough physical examination to look for **joint swelling, eye problems and rashes**. The doctor may order **X-rays** or **blood tests** to rule out other conditions or infections.

For inflammation and pain, your child's doctor may prescribe nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like **ibuprofen** (such as Advil or Motrin) and recommend a physical therapy program.



40% of children with rheumatoid arthritis are also **rheumatoid factor positive**. The presence of rheumatoid factor indicates an increased chance that JRA will continue into adulthood.



Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Once arthritis is controlled with medication, it is important to maintain a regular exercise program to help keep the muscles strong and healthy to support and protect joints and maintain range of motion.