

Other subspecialties of internal medicine

Our focus on musculoskeletal disease is similar to the focus of other internal medicine subspecialties concerned with specific organs, conditions, diseases, or age groups. Other subspecialties include gastroenterology (digestive tract), cardiology (heart) pulmonology (lungs), endocrinology (diabetes and other glandular disorders), nephrology (kidneys), hematology (blood), hepatology (liver), oncology (cancer), infectious diseases, allergy and immunology, sports medicine, geriatrics, and adolescent medicine.



Clearing up some confusion

We doctors of internal medicine are also known as “internists.”

This should not be confused with “interns,” who are doctors in their first year of training after medical school.

Nor are we the same as “general practitioners” (GPs), or “family physicians” (FPs), whose practices may include surgery, obstetrics and pediatrics, and whose training is not solely concentrated on adults.

A public education publication from the
American College of Physicians —
American Society of Internal Medicine
(ACP—ASIM)*
representing

115,000 doctors of internal medicine and medical students.

190 N. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1572
Telephone toll-free 800 523 1546, ext. 2600
www.doctorsforadults.com

*With support from the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation. 700100700

R H E U M A T O L O G Y
INTERNAL MEDICINE
DOCTORS FOR ADULTS™

Your Internist is a Rheumatologist



We specialize in joints, muscles & bones

Rheumatology is the subspecialty of internal medicine concerned with joints, muscles and bones and their roles in health and disease.

We rheumatologists must first complete seven or more years of medical school and postgraduate training and attain Board Certification in Internal Medicine. Then, for an additional two to three years, we study conditions specific to the musculoskeletal system — arthritis, certain autoimmune diseases, pain disorders and osteoporosis.



What we do

Rheumatologists are specially trained to do the detective work necessary to discover the cause of swelling and pain. It could be one of more than 100 diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, gout, lupus, osteoporosis, and fibromyalgia.

When you need a rheumatologist

If pain in the joints, muscles or bones is not severe or disabling and lasts just a few days, it makes sense to give the problem a reasonable chance to be resolved. But if the pain persists for more than a few days, you should see your internist, who may refer you to a rheumatologist. Many of these disorders are not easily identified in the early stages. Some of them are very serious and difficult to treat.

How we work with your primary care physician

Usually rheumatologists work with other physicians, advising them about a specific diagnosis or treatment plan. In some cases, we act as a manager, relying on many skilled professionals — nurses, physical and occupational therapists, psychologists and social workers.

Since musculoskeletal disorders are chronic, teamwork is important.

If you have questions about which physician to see, be sure to ask your internist.

