

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis or RA is when your joints are stiff in the morning for at least 30 minutes. Your joints may be swollen, warm, and painful. RA usually begins in the fingers, hands, wrists, knees and ankles.



Exercise 30 minutes a day.

RA causes serious joint damage and disability.

RA makes you more likely to have a stroke or heart attack.

What should I do to stay healthy?

- Start taking care of your RA as soon as you can
- Stay active: exercise or walk for 30 minutes a day
- Eat more foods with vitamin D and calcium like fish, low-fat milk, cheese or yogurt
- Get a pneumonia shot
- Get a flu shot every year
- Do not smoke
- Schedule regular doctor appointments

Contact the Arthritis Foundation about the Life Improvements Series www.arthritis.org.



Eat foods with vitamin D like fish and low-fat cheese.

Getting help (like medicine and physical therapy) early can keep your RA from getting worse.

Ask Your doctor's office or clinic...If you need:

- x-rays and blood tests
- medicine to keep your joints from getting worse
- to see a physical therapist
- to see an arthritis doctor (a rheumatologist)

Ask Your doctor's office or clinic...For advice about:

- what exercises you can do
- what you can do for your cholesterol
- how to stop smoking



Stop smoking. Ask your doctor for help.

Before you start taking medicines for RA, ask your doctor's office or pharmacist these questions:

- What are the names of my RA medicines? _____
- What time of day should I take my medicines? _____
- How long will I have to take the RA medicine? _____
- Does it matter if I take my medicine *with* or *without* food? _____
- Are there any foods or drinks I should **not** have while taking my medicine? _____
- What are the side effects of my RA medicines? _____

My next doctor visit: _____

The Arthritis Foundation has programs to help you take care of your RA. 1-800-283-7800 or www.arthritis.org

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