

TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR  
**RHEUMATOID  
ARTHRITIS**



A practical guide to treatments,  
services and lifestyle choices

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# How can this booklet help you?

**This booklet is designed for people who have rheumatoid arthritis.**

It will help you understand your condition so that you can better manage your symptoms and continue to lead an active and healthy life.

This booklet offers information and practical advice to help you:

- understand what rheumatoid arthritis is and what it means for you
- work with your healthcare team to manage the disease and reduce symptoms
- choose foods and activities that are appropriate to your situation
- understand how your medicines can help in the short and long term
- find support to cope with the emotional and lifestyle impact of arthritis.

The information inside is based on the latest evidence and recommendations, and has been reviewed by Australian experts in the field of arthritis to make sure it is current and relevant to your needs. So go ahead — take control of your rheumatoid arthritis!

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# Understanding rheumatoid arthritis

## What is rheumatoid arthritis?

Rheumatoid arthritis is a type of arthritis where your immune system mistakenly targets your own body. It especially affects the lining of the joints between your bones. Early symptoms include swelling, heat, tenderness, pain or stiffness in your joints. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) can occur at any age and is the second most common form of arthritis, affecting 500,000 Australians. RA is not an 'old person disease' and affects as many people over the age of 65 as under 65.

## What causes rheumatoid arthritis?

At present, the causes of rheumatoid arthritis are not fully understood and research continues. RA can be triggered by a range of factors, including smoking, infections and viruses.

Whatever starts the process, the main problem in RA is that your body's immune system begins to target your joints. While the immune system usually protects you against infections, in RA it mistakenly treats the tissue of your joints as 'foreign'.

The resulting inflammation can lead to the painful symptoms of arthritis and permanent damage to your bones and joints if untreated. Damage to your joints can be reduced with early and ongoing treatment.

## How will rheumatoid arthritis affect me?

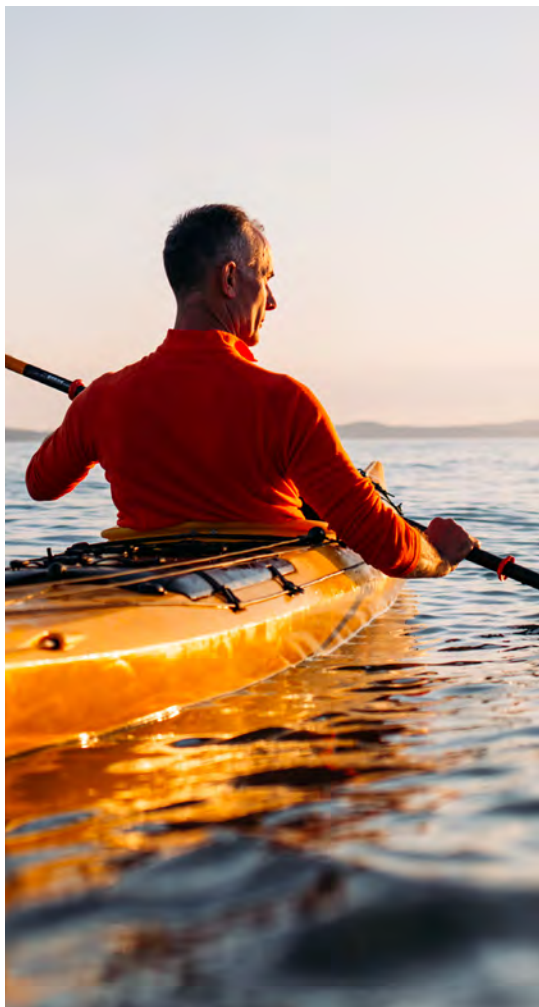
RA affects different people in different ways. In some cases, the disease may disappear, or may come and go for many years. An episode of re-occurrence is called a 'flare' and may be both painful and fatiguing. For other people, the symptoms and disability may slowly worsen over time.

If left untreated, RA may lead to damage to joints that cannot be repaired. Other parts of the body may also be affected, such as your lungs or your eyes. Fortunately, these problems outside of your joints are becoming increasingly uncommon with our more effective modern treatment strategies.

Joint inflammation may initially cause ongoing pain and some degree of disability, which can affect your

ability to work or undertake home duties. This may mean changing your role at work or asking for more support at home until treatment has become effective. However, more than half of the people who develop rheumatoid arthritis continue to work for many years after their diagnosis.

RA cannot be 'cured' at present, but for most people it can be managed with ongoing care. The goal of medical treatment is 'remission' which means a reduction or disappearance of all symptoms and signs. While not every patient may achieve 'remission', the majority will experience a significant reduction in pain, swelling and stiffness and an increase in their function.



### How will my doctor diagnose rheumatoid arthritis?

There is no single test for RA. Because early diagnosis and correct treatment can reduce the impact of the disease, most people with symptoms of RA should visit a specialist doctor (a rheumatologist) as soon as possible. Specialists look at the results from many tests to help them decide whether a person has RA. Early diagnosis within 12 weeks of onset of symptoms is ideal to avoid joint damage or other complications. Your rheumatologist will:

- talk to you about your symptoms, including where and when you feel joint pain
- check whether you have had fevers, lost weight or been very tired
- examine your hands, feet and other joints for swelling, heat, tenderness or bumps, called ‘nodules’
- take a blood sample to check whether your body’s immune system is activated and whether it is attacking your joints
- possibly use a needle to take a small amount of fluid from one of your affected joints
- send you to a radiologist for an

x-ray or other scan, such as an MRI or ultrasound, of the affected joints.

### What about parenthood?

Becoming a parent is usually possible if you have arthritis.

Some arthritis medicines can still be used during pregnancy if necessary, but many can harm the foetus and should not be taken while trying to conceive, when pregnant or during breastfeeding. Whether you are male or female, discuss your pregnancy plans with your doctor so that your medications can be reviewed.

With proper planning and medical care, most people with arthritis can have safe conceptions, successful pregnancies and manage the challenges of parenthood.

**For more information about arthritis, pregnancy and parenthood, and to hear directly from women with arthritis about their journeys to motherhood, please refer to the Arthritis Australia booklet *Arthritis, pregnancy and motherhood*, or visit [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au)**





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# Who can help?

Your friends & family      Exercise physiologist      Counsellor or psychologist

Pharmacist      Rheumatologist      Your doctor      Physiotherapist

Complementary therapist      Arthritis information & support group      Weight loss specialist

Arthritis Australia & Arthritis Affiliate Offices      Occupational therapist      Rheumatology nurse



The good news is that RA can be effectively managed – and a team approach is the best way to combat it. This involves you and your healthcare professionals together with support from family, friends and community organisations.

## How can you help?

Remember, the most important member of your healthcare team is you. By understanding your condition and learning to manage it, you can carry on living a normal life. Work closely with your healthcare team to develop a management plan for your arthritis, including medicines and other treatments. This will help you



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# Working with your GP

be actively involved in your care and decision-making about treatments. With the right treatment and advice, RA doesn't have to get in the way of working, travelling, relationships, pregnancy or parenting.

Understand how your treatments will help and how to get the most out of them.

**Contact your State/Territory Arthritis Office on 1800 011 041 for guidance. They can provide information and introduce you to support groups, exercise programs and other arthritis management services.**

[www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au) focuses on RA and other inflammatory forms of arthritis and has a range of resources designed to help you live, and live well, with RA. You can also see Arthritis Australia's range of information sheets for more about treatments for rheumatoid arthritis at [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au). Also, the 'myRA.org.au' website is a new patient support program offering extensive resources tailored to your stage in the disease journey and local support available to you.

## How can my GP help?

Your GP is an important partner in managing your RA. They can also help you access other specialists, health professionals and services. Your GP will probably make the initial diagnosis of RA and should then refer you to a rheumatologist.

Once your rheumatoid arthritis is fully assessed, your GP or specialist may prepare a care plan to manage the services and treatments you require.

They will also see you regularly to check on your treatment and its progress.

Your GP may employ a practice nurse, who may coordinate your care and access to services.

## How do I find a GP?

If you don't have a regular GP, speak to your local practice or medical centre.

## When should I see my GP?

- You should visit your GP at least every 3–4 months once your treatment is underway
- Visit your GP immediately if you notice a sudden worsening in symptoms or disability.

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# Seeing a rheumatologist

## How can a rheumatologist help?

Rheumatologists are doctors who specialise in diseases of the joints such as rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

All people with RA should visit a rheumatologist, and in some cases they will organise your ongoing care.

The rheumatologist will probably start you on medicine to slow down the disease and reduce pain, and may suggest certain types of physical therapies. Because every person's RA is different, your rheumatologist will probably select different treatments over time to find the best one for you.

If your joints have suffered major damage, the rheumatologist may refer you to an orthopaedic surgeon to assess your need for additional treatment, including joint replacement surgery.

## How do I find a rheumatologist?

You will need a referral from your GP to see a Rheumatologist. Your GP will refer you and will stay in touch with the Rheumatologist to coordinate your care.

Your GP may recommend a rheumatologist or you can contact the Australian Rheumatology Association on (02) 9252 2356 or visit [www.rheumatology.org.au](http://www.rheumatology.org.au) to find a rheumatologist in your area (but you will still need a referral from your GP).

## When should I see my rheumatologist?

- At first, you will probably see the rheumatologist every 2–3 weeks
- After that you should visit about every 3-6 months, depending on your treatment.

**See [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au) and [www.myRA.org.au](http://www.myRA.org.au) to learn more about rheumatologists, including what to expect at your first appointment and how to work with your specialist.**



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# Other health professionals

## How can other health professionals help?

Many people with RA visit a **physiotherapist** (physio). These practitioners can use various treatments, including exercise therapy and hydrotherapy (water exercise), to keep your joints as flexible, strong and pain-free as possible. They will also show you exercises and pain-relief techniques to use at home.

You might also visit an **occupational therapist** (OT), or they may come to your home or work. OTs can provide advice on how to do things in a way that reduces joint strain and pain and teach you strategies to protect the mobility of your joints, particularly those in your hands. They may also suggest changes to your house — such as new taps — or aids such as splints that can make life easier and protect your joints.

A **podiatrist** can help take care of your feet. They may find ways to reduce the pain in your toes, knees or hips, perhaps by providing shoe inserts or advice on footwear.

An **exercise physiologist** can give you advice about exercise, including how to get started safely and the best type of exercise for your health and ability.

Your local **arthritis office** can help you understand the range of educational

and service supports to live well with RA.

A **rheumatology nurse** can help you learn more about your condition, understand your treatments and provide support.

See the section on ‘Seeking Support’ if you would like information on health professionals who can help you to cope with the emotions you may be feeling, such as psychologists and counsellors.

A **pharmacist** can give you information about your medicines, side effects and interactions, as well as helping you to manage your medicines (e.g. checking dosage, managing repeats).

Visit [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au) to hear more about building your healthcare team and receive practical tips from various health professionals. Different people will have different preferences about the type of health professional or therapist they wish to see. There is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ but ensure your health professional is qualified and registered. You can check the registration of many types of health professionals with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) or by calling 1300 419 495.

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# How do I find a health professional?

## How can a rheumatologist help?

- Your GP or specialist can provide a referral, or you can contact a private therapist directly (see page 26 for information about finding a private therapist).
- If you have private health insurance, your health fund may cover part of the cost of seeing certain private health professionals.
- If your GP refers you to a health professional as part of a care plan, you may be able to have five sessions per year funded by Medicare. Ask your GP for more information.
- Most health professionals are available in the public health system (such as at a community health centre or public hospital). There is often a waiting list and you will usually need a referral from your GP. Their services are usually free or low cost. However, most rheumatologists are in private practice.

## When should I see a health professional?

- You may be referred to one or more therapists soon after your diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis by your GP or rheumatologist
- Ask your GP or rheumatologist about seeing a health professional if you notice your physical condition or abilities change.

**Visit [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au) to view our factsheet: Working with your Healthcare Team**

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# Healthy moves for your joints

While healthcare professionals can offer a range of treatments for your rheumatoid arthritis, there are many things you can do too.

**Quitting smoking is an important first step to help your joints — call the Quitline on 13 78 48 or visit [www.quitnow.gov.au](http://www.quitnow.gov.au)**

**Talk to your doctor or other care team members before making changes.**

## **Eating well**

### **What foods are good or bad for rheumatoid arthritis?**

There is very little evidence that particular foods are good or bad for people with RA and there is certainly no diet proven to ‘cure’ it. Eating a balanced diet that is low in saturated fat, sugar and salt, but high in fruit, vegetables and cereals is good for most people. This can help you lose weight (if required), which may reduce the strain on your joints.

**The Australian Government provides advice about the amount and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing, including Australian Dietary Guidelines, at [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)**

For help in working out the best things to eat, you can ask your GP to refer you to a dietitian or find one directly via the Dietitians Association of Australia — call 1800 812 942 or visit [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)

For more information about diet and suggestions from a dietitian visit [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au) or [www.https://arthritisaustralia.com.au](https://arthritisaustralia.com.au) to view our factsheet: Healthy Eating and Arthritis.

## Fish oils

Current research suggests eating foods rich in Omega-3 fats can help reduce inflammation in RA. While these effects are modest compared with medicines, omega-3 fats do not have serious side effects. Foods rich in omega-3 fats include oily fish, like sardines and salmon, plus canola oil and walnuts. If you cannot eat these foods regularly, daily fish oil supplements that provide around 2.7 g of omega-3 (EPA plus DHA) may be a useful substitute.

Visit [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au) to view our factsheet: Fish Oils

## Keeping active

### What exercise should I be doing?

Regular physical activity benefits everyone, particularly if you have rheumatoid arthritis. It helps to reduce your pain, strengthen your muscles, maintain joint function and improve your sleep and overall health.

Inflammation in your joints, tendons and other tissues may make it harder for you to stand up straight, turn and bend or take a deep breath. Your physio or exercise physiologist can suggest suitable exercises for you which will improve your posture and help to maintain flexibility. You should aim to do these exercises every day, at least five times per week. If you experience early morning stiffness, gentle stretching exercises under a warm shower will help.

It is also important to do at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on most days of the week for your general fitness. You can do this either in one go or break your exercise into smaller efforts (for instance, three 10-minute or two 15-minute blocks per day).



## Healthy moves for your joints

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Activities that are likely to be good for your fitness include walking, swimming, water exercise, low-impact aerobics, and riding a bike or exercise bike. Your physio or exercise physiologist can also suggest specific exercises and stretches that are appropriate for your situation. Ask your physiotherapist or exercise physiologist to create a special exercise program you can do at home or at the local gym or swimming pool.

**Ask your State/Territory Arthritis Office about appropriate exercise programs in your local area, including community groups, swimming pools, sports centres or gyms who run programs specifically for people with arthritis.**

**For more information about staying active and suggestions from a physiotherapist visit [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au)**

### **What if it hurts to exercise?**

The level and type of exercise you will be able to do varies from person to person — while some people can aim to keep or improve their fitness through exercise, others may be aiming to remain mobile.

Some people will experience pain in their soft tissue and muscles when first exercising. If pain feels unusual or severe, or lasts for more than two hours after you have stopped an activity, it is probably best to avoid or change that activity. Try to plan your exercise for times when you are experiencing the least pain — generally when you are least tired and your medicine is having maximum effect.

If you are new to exercise or finding exercise difficult, see a physio or exercise physiologist for advice. They can suggest safe exercises tailored to your condition and make sure you are doing your exercises correctly so you minimise the risk of an injury.

Visit [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au) to view our factsheet: Exercise and Rheumatoid Arthritis



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# Making the most of medicines

## **Will medicine cure my rheumatoid arthritis?**

At present, there is no 'cure' for RA. However, early use of the right medicines can slow down the damage caused by the disease, relieve pain and stiffness and reduce long-term disability.

## **What is the right medicine for me?**

All medicines have risks and benefits, so before you start treatment talk to your doctor and pharmacist about how each medicine should be helping you and what risks it might have. Make sure your doctor knows about any other health problems that you or your family members have, as this can help them choose the best medicine for you.

You should also make sure that you understand what side effects the medicine might have, including what to do or whom to speak to if you experience any unwanted effects from your medication.

Many arthritis medicines need to be taken regularly to work properly and should not be stopped suddenly

— talk to your doctor if you have concerns about side effects, safety or cost.

Each person responds differently to arthritis medicines, which means that you will need to work with your specialist and GP to find the best medications and doses for you. This can take time, but by finding the most effective medicines with the least side effects, you can hope to really make a difference in controlling your RA. There are many different types of medicines available, access to some types under the PBS is restricted. Your specialist will guide you.

Your disease may also change over time. This means that you may need to change or add medicines over the course of your treatment — you may not be on the same medicine forever. Your specialist will guide you.

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# How will the medicines help?

**Doctors now know that the best way to treat rheumatoid arthritis is to start treatment that modifies the disease as soon as possible.**

The main medicines for RA are the disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs, called DMARDs, which not only relieve symptoms but can also reduce the risk of long-term damage to your joints.

Sometimes one DMARD is not enough, so you may need to take two or even three to gain the best control of your arthritis.

There are a number of different DMARDs available including biological and biosimilar DMARDs. Access to some is restricted under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). Your specialist is the best one to guide you.

Regular blood tests (every 1–3 months) are necessary to test the effectiveness of the drugs you are taking and to check for any unwanted side effects.

**Are there other medicines that can help?**

Some pain-relieving medicines (analgesics), like paracetamol, can reduce your painful symptoms.

A group of drugs called NSAIDs (anti-inflammatory drugs) can help relieve pain, and they also reduce swelling and stiffness.

Corticosteroid drugs can be very effective in controlling many symptoms, but they are usually used for short-to-medium term periods in conjunction with other medications because of the risk of long term side effects.

It is important to understand the different roles your medications may play in managing your arthritis.

Use of all medication including any over the counter medicines should be discussed with your GP and specialist.

**For detailed information about the medicines used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, visit [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au)**

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# What side effects do these medicines have?

To understand more about your medicines and any risks or side effects that they may have, read the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) leaflet. If your medicine pack does not contain one ask your pharmacist or doctor or you can download the CMI from the NPS Medicine wise website – [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au). CMI leaflets provide easy to understand information including what the medicine is for and how it is used; things to consider before using the medicine; and possible side effects and what to do if they occur. If you have concerns about taking your medicines such as side effects or are considering conception, pregnancy or breast feeding speak with your GP or specialist.

**The Australian Rheumatology Association and Arthritis Australia publish medicine information sheets.**  
**Call the Arthritis Infoline 1800 011 041 for copies or visit [www.rheumatology.org.au](http://www.rheumatology.org.au) or [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au)**

## **What other treatments can help?**

There are many promises made for non-medical ‘cures’ or treatments to ease arthritis – while some of these may help, many have not been proven to be effective. For example, there is unclear evidence that treatments such as acupuncture and gamma linolenic acid (GLA) are helpful in reducing the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and further research is needed.

If you are considering other treatments do some research first. Contact your local arthritis office or visit our website [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au) for more information.

Ensure your practitioner is qualified and registered. Most therapies have a professional association you can contact. Some qualifications, for example Chinese Medicine Practitioners, can be checked at the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au) or by calling 1300 419 495.

Because herbal, homeopathic, Ayurvedic or Chinese medicines may affect the treatments prescribed by your doctor, please tell your GP and specialist what other treatments you are thinking about using.

You may feel concerned that your doctor or other members of your healthcare team will disapprove of complementary therapies. However, it is very important to keep your healthcare team informed, even if they do not approve. Your healthcare team, particularly your doctor and pharmacist, can't give you the best professional advice without knowing all the treatments you are using. This includes vitamin supplements, herbal medicines and other therapies.

**Visit [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au) to view our factsheet: Complementary Therapies**





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# Seeking support

## Why me?

It's perfectly normal to wonder why you have developed RA and to feel angry, sad, frightened or confused about it. By taking control of your rheumatoid arthritis and working with your healthcare team, you can approach the disease with a positive attitude. However, sometimes the condition can get you down, especially if pain, stiffness or disability are affecting your everyday life.

It may also feel as though people around you – even close friends or family – don't understand what you're going through.

**Visit [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au) to view our factsheet: Arthritis and Emotional Wellbeing**

## Who can help?

There are many people who can help you deal with the emotional side of RA. Your first step is to try to talk honestly with your partner, parents or children about how you feel. Give them a chance to talk too –

they might have worries or feel that they don't know enough about your disease and how it is affecting you.

Visit your GP if you are worried that unwanted feelings are too strong or have been there for a long time. Your GP may be able to suggest ways of coping, or may prescribe medicines if you are especially worried or depressed.

**Visit [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au) to hear directly from people with rheumatoid arthritis and similar conditions on how they learned to deal with the emotional ups and downs of living with arthritis.**

They may also refer you to a counsellor or psychologist, who can talk to you about your worries, feelings and moods, then suggest practical ways to work through them. If you want to contact a psychologist directly, call the Australian Psychological Society on 1800 333 497 or visit [www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au) beyondblue provides information and advice about depression, anxiety,



available treatments and where to get help. Visit [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) or call 1300 22 4636.

Lifeline provides a 24hr confidential telephone crisis support service for anyone across Australia experiencing a personal crisis. Call 13 11 14.

### **What other assistance is available?**

There are many resources available to help people with rheumatoid arthritis. Your doctor may put you in touch with a social worker, who can help explain the financial and health services that are available to you. These can include any pensions or allowances that you might be entitled to, plus any financial assistance such as Health Care Concession Cards or low-cost treatment programs.

Your local council, community health centre, community group or religious organisation may also offer programs that include practical advice, activities, social networks or just someone to talk to.

There are Independent Living Centres in each state that provide advice on products and services, including aids and devices, that can help with day-to-day activities. Visit [www.ilcaustralia.org.au](http://www.ilcaustralia.org.au) or call 1300 885 886 for your closest centre or more information.

Contact your State/Territory Arthritis Office to find out about their wide range of resources, management programs and support groups — call 1800 011 041 or visit [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au)

**Arthritis Australia's website [www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au) allows you to hear directly from people living with rheumatoid arthritis and similar conditions about how they have managed to survive, and thrive, with arthritis.**



### **What about information from other websites?**

The web can be a useful source of information and support. However, not everyone who puts information on the web is a qualified health practitioner.

Some organisations make unrealistic promises in order to sell their products. Treatment options and practices from overseas may also not be relevant or approved in Australia. Always check information from the web with a trusted member of your healthcare team.

**The Australian Government's Health Direct website [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au) is an excellent starting point for web searches, as every site that Health Direct links to has been checked for quality and accuracy of information.**

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# Glossary of terms

**Analgesic an-al-jee-zik**

A medicine that helps relieve pain.

**Arthritis are-thry-tiss**

Inflammation of one or more joints.

Rheumatoid arthritis means that the inflammation occurs mainly in the lining of the joints (the synovium).

**Corticosteroid core-tick-o-ster-oyd**

A type of medicine that is very effective in reducing inflammation.

**Dietitian die-et-ish-un**

A health professional who can recommend what foods you should and shouldn't eat.

**DMARD dee-mard**

A range of medicines that are known as disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs. These help reduce damage to your joints as well as relieving symptoms.

**Exercise physiologist fizz-ee-o-lo-jist**

A health professional who can suggest an exercise program tailored to your health and ability.

**Inflammation in-fla-may-shun**

The body's response to damage or infection, which mistakenly attacks your joints in rheumatoid arthritis.

Inflammation can cause pain, swelling, warmth, redness and difficulty moving the joint.

**NSAID en-sayd**

A group of medicines known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. These can reduce inflammation, swelling and joint stiffness.

**Occupational therapist****occ-u-pay-shun-al theh-ah-pist**

A health professional who looks at your activities at home or work, then suggests changes or devices to make everyday life easier on your joints.

**Physiotherapist fizz-ee-o-ther-a-pist**

A health professional who uses treatments to keep your joints mobile, and can suggest exercises and devices for you to use at home.

**Podiatrist po-die-a-trist**

A health professional who can suggest changes to the way you walk or provide special shoe inserts, to take the strain off your joints and reduce pain.

**Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)**

Is an autoimmune disease that causes pain and swelling of the joints.

**Rheumatologist roo-ma-tol-o-jist**

A doctor who is a specialist in treating problems of the joints. Your rheumatologist will probably start and review most of your medicines and treatments.

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# Useful resources

## Australian resources

For information and advice about all forms of arthritis visit **[www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au)**  
**Ph: 1800 011 041**

For more on living, and living well, with rheumatoid arthritis **[www.empowered.org.au](http://www.empowered.org.au)**

For access to quality online information about rheumatoid arthritis, start at Health Direct **[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)**

For advice on healthy eating and appropriate exercise, visit Healthy Active **[www.healthyactive.gov.au](http://www.healthyactive.gov.au)**

For advice on quitting smoking, contact the Quitline on **13 78 48** or visit **[www.quitnow.gov.au](http://www.quitnow.gov.au)**

To find a specialist, contact the Australian Rheumatology Association **[www.rheumatology.org.au](http://www.rheumatology.org.au)**  
**Ph: (02) 9252 2356**

To find a physiotherapist, contact the Australian Physiotherapy Association **[www.physiotherapy.asn.au](http://www.physiotherapy.asn.au)**  
**Ph: 1300 306 622**

To find an occupational therapist, contact Occupational Therapy Australia **[www.otaus.com.au](http://www.otaus.com.au)**  
**Ph: 1300 682 878**

To find a podiatrist, contact the Australasian Podiatry Council **[www.apodc.com.au](http://www.apodc.com.au)**  
**Ph: (03) 9416 3111**

To find an exercise physiologist, contact Exercise and Sports Science Australia **[www.essa.org.au](http://www.essa.org.au)**  
**Ph: (07) 3171 3335**

To find a dietitian, contact the Dietitians Association of Australia **[www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)**  
**Ph: 1800 812 942**

To find a psychologist, contact the Australian Psychological Society **[www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au)**  
**Ph: 1800 333 497**

Please keep in mind that some issues and treatments from overseas may not be relevant in Australia.

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# My contact details

**My name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**My GP:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**My specialist:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**My support team:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

## My medicines

Name	Dosage	Instructions

# ARTHRITIS AUSTRALIA

Arthritis Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that provides support and information for all Australians affected by arthritis.

Contact your State/Territory Arthritis Office to find out about the range of awareness and education programs, support services and resources available.



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## **ARTHRITIS ACT**

Building 18, 170 Haydon Drive  
Bruce ACT 2617  
PO Box 908 Belconnen ACT 2616

## **ARTHRITIS NEW SOUTH WALES**

Suite 1, 15/32 Delhi Road  
North Ryde NSW 2113  
Locked Bag 2216 North Ryde NSW 1670

## **ARTHRITIS NORTHERN TERRITORY**

Shop 18, Rapid Creek Business Village  
48 Trower Road, Millner NT 0810  
PO Box 452 Nightcliff NT 0814

## **ARTHRITIS QUEENSLAND**

Level 1, 42 Costin Street  
Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006  
PO Box 2121 Windsor QLD 4030

## **ARTHRITIS SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

111A Welland Avenue  
Welland SA 5007

## **ARTHRITIS TASMANIA**

19A Main Road, Moonah TAS 7009  
PO Box 780 Moonah TAS 7009

## **ARTHRITIS WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

17 Lemnos Street  
Shenton Park WA 6008  
PO Box 34 Wembley WA 6913

## **ARTHRITIS AUSTRALIA**

Level 2, 255 Broadway  
Glebe NSW 2037  
PO Box 550 Broadway NSW 2007  
Phone: 02 9518 4441  
Fax: 02 9518 4011  
Email: [info@arthritisaustralia.com.au](mailto:info@arthritisaustralia.com.au)

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**Arthritis**  
AUSTRALIA

**Arthritis Infoline: 1800 011 041** [www.arthritisaustralia.com.au](http://www.arthritisaustralia.com.au)