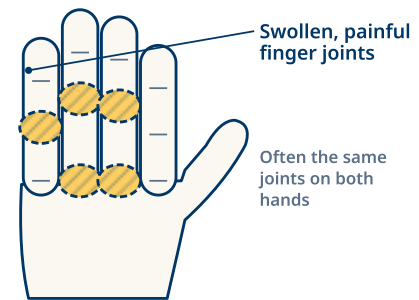


Rheumatoid Arthritis

What it is

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a disease where the immune system attacks the lining of the joints. This causes pain, swelling and stiffness. Early treatment may help protect your joints.



Common symptoms

- Painful, swollen, warm joints, often the same joints on both sides
- Morning stiffness lasting more than 30 to 60 minutes
- Fatigue, low-grade fever or feeling unwell
- Firm bumps under the skin (rheumatoid nodules)
- Reduced grip strength or trouble with daily tasks

Self-care tips

- Protect your joints. Use tools that make gripping and lifting easier.
- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Do not stop them on your own.
- Keep all lab and follow-up visits.
- Stay active with gentle exercise, and rest during flares.

What to expect at GSMC

First visit: A rheumatologist reviews your symptoms, history and medicines, and examines your joints and skin.

Tests: Blood tests and imaging, as needed, help confirm the diagnosis.

Follow-up: Regular visits and lab checks help us adjust treatment over time.

When to call us

- A flare that does not settle with your usual plan
- Fever or signs of infection while on your medicines
- New symptoms, such as a rash, chest pain or leg swelling
- Side effects from your medicines

Call 911 for chest pain, trouble breathing, or signs of a stroke.

Call 732-202-3000

One number for all offices. Questions about this handout? We are glad to help.

Our 7 offices: Whiting · Toms River (Hooper Ave) · Brick · Barnegat · Manahawkin · Freehold · West Long Branch

gsmedicalcenter.org/services/rheumatology/conditions/rheumatoid-arthritis/



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This handout is general information and is not a substitute for medical advice.