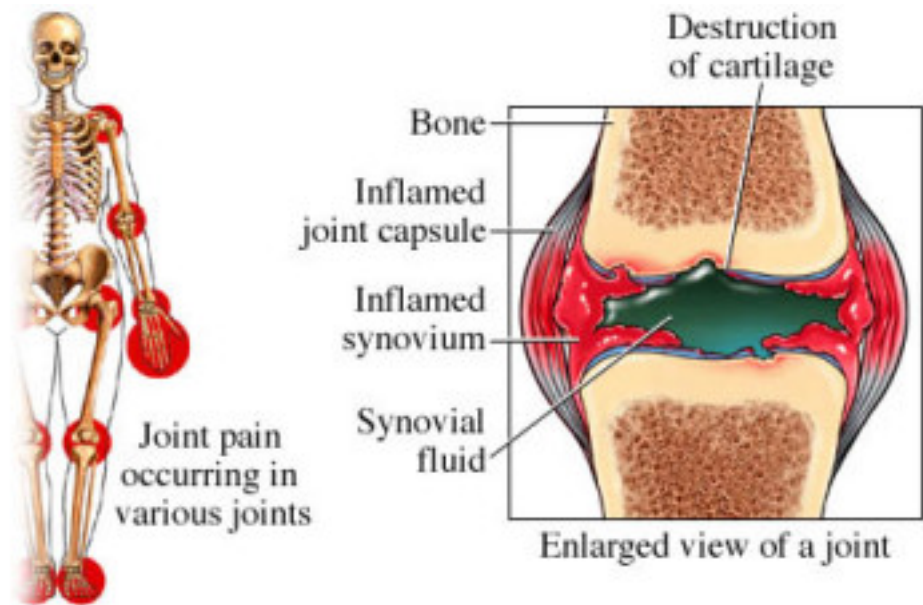


What is Arthritis?



Heberden's and Bouchard's Nodes

REPLAY



[Heberden's nodes](#) are the size of peas and develop on the end joints of the fingers. [Bouchard's nodes](#) develop on the middle joints of the fingers. The bones also become enlarged. The result is pain, redness, and swelling.

Click on the [blue words](#) to highlight the structures

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Arthritis means "**joint inflammation**" and refers to a group of diseases that cause **pain, swelling, stiffness, and loss of motion in the joints and other supporting structures of the body such as muscles, tendons, ligaments, and bones**. Some rheumatic diseases can affect other parts of the body, including various internal organs.

There are over 120 forms of arthritis and other rheumatic diseases. These diseases may cause pain, stiffness, and swelling in joints and other supporting structures of the body such as muscles, tendons, ligaments, and bones. Some forms can also affect other parts of the body, including various internal organs.

Many people use the word "arthritis" to refer to all rheumatic diseases. However, the word, technically and literally, means joint inflammation - that is, swelling, redness, heat, and pain caused by tissue injury or disease in the joint. The many different kinds of arthritis comprise just a portion of the rheumatic diseases. Some rheumatic diseases are described as connective tissue diseases because they affect the body's connective tissue--the supporting framework of the body and its internal organs. Others are known as autoimmune diseases because they are caused by a problem in which the immune system harms the body's own healthy tissues. Examples of some rheumatic diseases are:

- Osteoarthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Fibromyalgia
- Systemic lupus erythematosus
- Scleroderma
- Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis
- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Gout

In this article, the term "arthritis" is used as a generic term to refer to arthritis and other rheumatic diseases.

For practicality, arthritis can be categorised under the following simple classifications:-

- Infectious arthritis due to viruses and bacteria.
- Metabolic arthritis, including gout and dietary deficiencies.
- Rheumatoid disease, including arthritis caused by protozoa.
- Degenerative arthritis, including osteoporosis.
- Mixed arthritis = patients with two or more types of diseases.

Infectious Arthritis

Virus and bacterial infections are usually self-evident, and the arthritis phenomena are secondary. Treatment of the primary source will halt the process leaving few residuals. Foci of chronic infection

in teeth, nose and throat, lungs, intestines, kidneys and pelvis must always be sought and eliminated when found.

Metabolic Arthritis

Careful studies of the body chemistry, diet, hormone balance and metabolism of patients at our clinic show that more than 60% show disorders or deficiencies that either are the causes of their arthritis or contribute to the severity of other forms of arthritis.

Gout signs and symptoms are classic. And the blood uric acid levels are confirmatory evidence.

Protein deficiencies are often found in association with carbohydrate and fat excesses, obesity, arteriosclerosis and lack of important minerals and vitamins. Osteoarthritis may truly be caused by these factors rather than to "old age" and degenerative changes" in the bones and joints.

Hormone problems, such as menopausal osteoporosis, are so very common, and yet are pre-existing conditions in most hip fractures and compression fracture of the spine.

Calcium deficiency and lack of **vitamin D** in the diet are usually found together in the same patient, causing "soft bones" which in x-rays are frequently interpreted as "hypertrophic arthritis" because of the spurs and exostoses which they produce.

Excess calcium deposits in the body particularly in the cartilage of the ribs, indicate a lack of calcium intake rather than a surplus, and the bones are more atrophic than normal.

Rheumatoid Disease and Rheumatoid Arthritis have always been the "mystery disease" of the medical practice. There is some indications that pathogenic protozoa are the etiological agents because they respond to the use of anti-protozoal drugs.

Degenerative Arthritis

A medical history of one or more of the following:

1. Joint injuries, sprains, fractures, falls, etc.
2. Repeated trauma, such as heavy work, lifting, carrying.
3. Micro-trauma, of fingers and hands, with machine work or housework.
4. Past infectious diseases in the vicinity, such as tonsil and throat infections,
5. which may be the cause of intervertebral disc degeneration in the cervical spine.
6. Systemic infections, currently, or in the past.
7. Chronic gastro-intestinal problems.
8. Signs of premature aging in other systems.

9. X-ray: Either sclerosis or osteoporosis, but with loss of joint cartilage space,
10. hypertrophic margins, ligamentous calcification.

Mixed Arthritis

Some clinical studies found that 40% patients exhibit signs and symptoms which can be found in more than one of the above classes.

Degenerative arthritis frequently follows the joint damage done initially by infectious or rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis and osteoporosis are often seen together, particularly in elderly women. Some osteoarthritis joints become inflammatory. Hypertrophic changes occur in infectious and rheumatoid arthritis after the diseases have been arrested. Ankylosing arthritis of the spine may follow infectious arthritis of the genito-urinary tract, malaria, etc.

An accurate diagnosis and a comprehensive history, physical examination and complete laboratory and x-ray studies will often indicate the treatment which will be successful for that patient.

"Auto-immune disease" will probably become a discarded theory and an obsolete term for rheumatoid disease as we learn more about infectious arthritis and the role of pathogenic protozoa. Immunity to these organisms is a field for research.

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