

Reactive Arthritis

Reactive arthritis is a form of arthritis affecting the eyes, joints, skin and urethra. The disease is often recognized by a number of symptoms in various organs in the body that might or might not appear simultaneously. It can come on quickly or slowly over the course of time, with recurrences or sudden remissions. It primarily affects men who are sexually active between the ages of 20 and 40. For those who have HIV, the risk of getting Reactive arthritis is far higher.

The cause of the arthritis isn't known, but research suggests that it is part of a genetic predisposition. Roughly 75 percent of those who have the condition have had a positive blood test for HLA-B27. In the majority of sexually active men, the condition often follows an infection from a sexually transmitted disease. In other instances, people develop symptoms after an intestinal infection.

If you suspect Reiter's, or have been diagnosed with it, then there is a good possibility you have already seen a rheumatologist. The rheumatologist will do blood tests, scans/X-rays, or advise on physiotherapy treatment if appropriate.

This condition is sometimes known as Reiter's Syndrome.

Reactive Arthritis Anatomy

The skeletal system is made up of all the joints and bones in the body. All of the bones are a complex group of living organs that are composed of multiple cells, protein fibers and a range of minerals. The skeleton serves as a scaffold by delivering protection and support for the soft tissues that make up the remainder of the body. The system provides a series of attachment points that allow the muscles to move at the joints.

New blood cells are generated by the red bone marrow that is inside of the bones. The bones act as the warehouse for the body's calcium, energy and iron in the form of fat. The skeleton continues growing throughout childhood and serves as a framework for the remainder of the body to continue growing along with it.

The most common joints affected are the knees, ankles, wrists, fingers, and spine/pelvis. In addition the eyes can become inflamed with conjunctivitis, and the urinary tract inflammation can occur.

How to Treat Reactive Arthritis:

1. Antibiotics

Bacterial infections need to be treated using an antibiotic. Getting the antibiotic in your system will help to decrease the symptoms resulting from the condition.

2. Anti-Inflammatory Medication

Taking an anti-inflammatory medication will help to alleviate some of the pain and inflammation in the affected areas. Discuss with your GP or doctor the best course of treatment.

3. Steroids

If you are suffering with eye inflammation or skin eruptions, steroids can help to ease the symptoms and bring pain relief. This will be managed by your doctor.

4. Exercise

For those who are struggling with a chronic form of this arthritis, you might be prescribed with a round of physical therapy and regular exercise. You don't want the joints to become stiff because of the condition setting in.

Tips:

- Many people will recover from the condition in about three to four months, but about half of all those individuals will end up having recurrences for several years.
- Some individuals will develop complications that can include an inflammation of the heart muscle, glaucoma, inflammation that comes with spine stiffening, progressive blindness, fluid accumulation in the lungs and feet abnormalities.
- Whenever engaging in sexual activity, always make sure to use physical protection to prevent the spread of infections in the urinary tract, and also going to the toilet after sex may help.
- If you start noticing painful urination or a penile discharge, you need to seek medical attention.
- Patches of scaly skin that appear on the soles, trunk, palms or scalp are often associated with this condition.