

Juvenile Arthritis



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0845 300 1818

What is Juvenile Arthritis?

Juvenile Arthritis is a chronic disease of children causing pain, stiffness and swelling of the joints. It is also known as Still's Disease. There are several varieties that may affect many or only a few joints. One child in a thousand will suffer from a juvenile form of Arthritis.

Living with Juvenile Arthritis

The severity of the condition will dictate what individuals can do. Symptoms vary greatly from day to day; therefore the ability to carry out tasks will vary daily.

- Often stiffness is most marked in the morning and therefore affected children may be slow to get involved in the activities of the day.
- The affected child may be more tired than average because of the disease.
- An affected young person may often need to wear splints on a joint. This rests an acutely inflamed joint and maintains the position of the joint to prevent loss of function.
- The affected individual usually needs to take regular medication, which may cause serious side effects.
- Relapses of the disease may occur from time to time leading to admission to hospital for prolonged spells.

Practical Tips

- More time may be needed for the young person to complete routine tasks.
- Many children do not admit when they are in pain.

- Body contact sports may need to be avoided.
- Children with Arthritis should be treated as normal. They should be given appropriate assistance to achieve independence. Social isolation may occur and adolescence may become a particularly difficult time.
- Many special devices are available to help with every day living, e.g. special cutlery, cup, pencils and toilet aids.
- Camping may be possible, but individual arrangements may need to be made such as provision of a camp bed as this may be more comfortable. Correct position during sleep can be important to prevent further damage to the joints.
- Before going away be sure to know what medication is taken regularly and in what circumstances other tablets may be necessary.
- They may also need to continue with a regular programme of physiotherapy, which may require a Leader's assistance. Swimming is often a beneficial exercise and should be included in an activity programme.

Further Information

If possible, discuss with the individual and their parents/guardian the extent of the disability to identify what help is needed and how to best provide this. If practical, the young person's parents/guardian might be able to arrange for you to have a chat with the GP or specialist involved.

The Scout Information Centre

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email info.centre@scout.org.uk www.scoutbase.org.uk

Support Organisations

Arthritis Care

18 Stephenson Way
London
NW1 2HD
Telephone: 020 7380 6500
Fax: 020 7380 6505
Helpline: 0808 800 4050 (Monday – Friday, 12pm
– 4pm)
Email: helplines@arthritiscare.org.uk
Website: <http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk/>

Fax: 0845 458 3971
Helpline: 0845 458 3969
Email: enquiries@rheumatoid.org.uk
Website: <http://www.rheumatoid.org.uk/>

Arthritis Research Campaign

Copeman House
St Mary's Court
St Mary's Gate
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S41 7TD
United Kingdom
Telephone: 0870 850 5000
Fax: 01246 558007
Email: Info@arc.org.uk
Website: <http://www.arc.org.uk/>

Children's Chronic Arthritis Association

Ground Floor,
Amber Gate,
City Wall Road,
Worcester,
WR1 2AH
Telephone: 01905 745595
Fax: 01905 745703
Email: info@ccaa.org.uk
Website: <http://www.ccaa.org.uk/>

National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society

Unit B4 Westacott Business Centre
Westacott Way
Littlewick Green
Maidenhead
Berkshire
SL6 3RT
Telephone: 01628 823524