

JUVENILE IDIOPATHIC ARTHRITIS

About JIA

Arthritis is often associated with older people, but it **can also affect children**. Most types of childhood arthritis are known as juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA). JIA causes swelling, inflammation, and pain in one or more joints.

There are a variety of triggers for JIA and sometimes the trigger is unknown. For some children, JIA goes into remission over time, but with good management from a multidisciplinary team, **most young people with JIA can lead a normal life**.

If you/your child is diagnosed with inflammatory arthritis, **lasting more than six weeks, before their 16th birthday**, it's called JIA. It most commonly occurs between **ages 2-6 and 12-14**, and is slightly more common in girls.



JIA AFFECTS APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 1000 CHILDREN

Symptoms of JIA

There are several different subtypes of JIA and symptoms vary between them. Knowing which subtype you/your child has helps the medical team provide the best treatment.

You should see a doctor if you/your child has any of these symptoms for more than a couple of weeks:

- **painful, swollen or stiff joint(s)**, particularly in the mornings
- **back pain** that is particularly worse in the morning
- **joint(s)** that are **warm** to touch
- increased **tiredness**
- a **fever** that keeps returning
- a **limp** but no injury

The earlier someone is diagnosed with JIA, the better. This is so that effective treatment can be started to improve symptoms and return to all activities.



Exercising with JIA

It is important to keep exercising if you/your child has JIA. It will help maintain general fitness and make muscles stronger and more flexible. This will help prevent damage to joints, improve movement, coordination, confidence, and quality of life.

A physiotherapist will create an exercise plan to suit you/your child's needs. As the arthritis becomes controlled and general fitness improves, you/your child can slowly start to make the exercises harder.



Physiotherapy for JIA

Physiotherapists work with children and their families (and sometimes schools and sports coaches) to co-develop a plan to:

- **improve physical function** (mobility, dexterity, strength, endurance)
- support you and your family to **implement rehabilitation exercises** into a normal routine
- support knowledge and skills in **pain management**
- help you/your child work towards meaningful life **goals related to activity** (eg sports or other physical hobbies)
- provide advice, guidance or prevention strategies to **avoid or reduce future** musculoskeletal (sports) **injury**
- build you/your child's **confidence** in their own physical abilities
- help problem solve and **manage difficult situations** that may arise

Physiotherapy forms an important role in the management of the symptoms of JIA and will help you/your child do the activities you like doing.



**World
PT Day
2023**

8 SEPTEMBER



**World
Physiotherapy**

#WorldPTDay

www.world.physio/wptday