

Resource

Diagnosis

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Symptoms of RA include painful, stiff, swollen joints. The stiffness is usually worst in the morning and after periods of inactivity. The stiffness in the morning can last for a long time and the joints affected are usually symmetrical (meaning they are the same joints, on either side of the body). If you suspect you may have these symptoms, the first step is to speak to your GP, who will perform an initial examination and may do some blood tests if they think you could have RA.

RA can be very difficult to diagnose, as there is no single test to show whether or not you have the disease. Diagnosis is decided through a combination of blood tests, scans (such as X-ray or ultrasound) and an examination of your joints by a consultant rheumatologist. If you feel that you may have RA, the next step would be to speak to your GP about your concerns. If they feel that it is possible that you have the disease, they will arrange for you to have these tests and be referred to a rheumatologist for diagnosis.

Newly diagnosed pack

Includes New2RA, Fatigue Matters and Medicines and RA

New2RA – A self-help guide for people with newly diagnosed rheumatoid arthritis

Fatigue Matters – A self-help guide for people living with rheumatoid arthritis

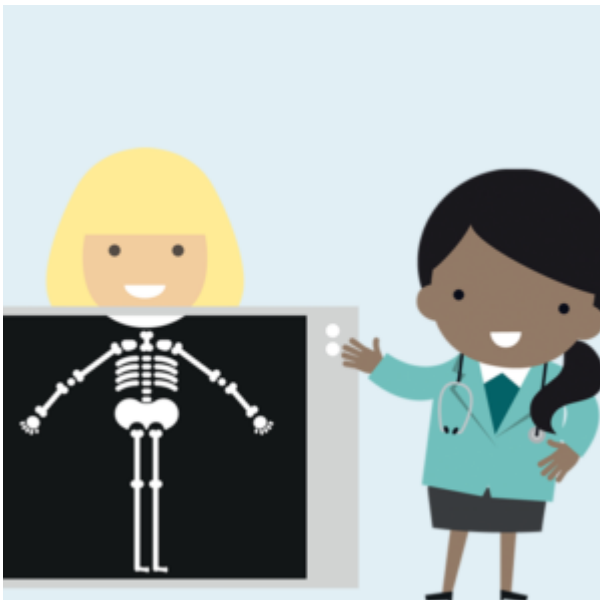
Medicines and RA – We believe it is essential that people living with RA understand why certain medicines are used, when they are used and how they work to manage the condition.



[Article](#)

[Getting the most from your initial consultation with your GP](#)

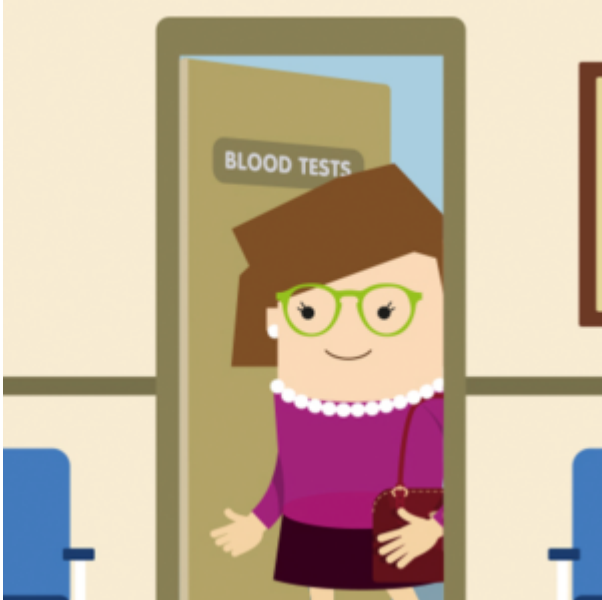
[Early treatment has been shown to provide improved disease outcomes in RA. It is therefore essential that people with suspected RA get the most out of initial consultations with their GP, putting them on track for earlier referral, diagnosis and treatment.](#)



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[Making a diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis](#)

[Diagnosis of RA is not straight forward as there is no individual test for RA. A diagnosis tends to be made by a consultant rheumatologist on the basis of tests, examination and ruling out other possible causes for symptoms.](#)



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[Understanding your RA blood tests](#)

[Blood tests are frequently used to help in the diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis \(RA\) but also to assess any potential problems with the various drugs that are used to treat RA.?](#)



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Seropositive and seronegative

Seropositive or seronegative is a term used to describe whether you have rheumatoid factor (RF) and anti-CCP?(or ACPA) in your blood; two proteins more commonly found in people with

Article

Imaging in RA

There are a number of different imaging techniques that are used in the diagnosis and monitoring of rheumatoid arthritis, including X-ray, ultrasound and MRI.

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