

Resource

## DMARDs

'DMARD' (pronounced 'dee-mard') stands for disease modifying anti-rheumatic drug. These drugs are usually prescribed early on in the disease by the rheumatology team. They help to slow down the progression of your RA and in doing so can improve the day-to-day symptoms of your disease.

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Unlike drugs used purely for symptom control, such as painkillers and anti-inflammatories, DMARDs can take a number of weeks to kick in (usually around 3-12 weeks). They will then continue to improve up until around 6 months when they will be working to their full potential. Each individual will respond differently to different medications, and it is not currently possible for healthcare professionals to know in advance which medications will work best for you. Therefore, a lot of trial and error may be needed to determine the best medication or combination of medications to control your RA, and because each drug tried can take several weeks to take effect, this process can take some time.

However, there are many different DMARDs available and newer drugs available or in the pipeline to try if these drugs do not work well for you, give you side effects which are severe or do not lessen over time or if they lose their effectiveness. There is, therefore, a good chance that your healthcare team will find a drug or combination of drugs to suit you and help keep your condition under good control.

## Medicines in Rheumatoid Arthritis Booklet

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.

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## [Methotrexate](#)

[Methotrexate is the 'gold standard' disease modifying antirheumatic drug \(DMARD\) for the control of inflammatory arthritis.](#)

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## [Sulfasalazine](#)

[Sulfasalazine is a disease modifying anti-rheumatic drug \(DMARD\) that can be taken on its own or used in combination with other medicines.](#)

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## [Hydroxychloroquine](#)

Hydroxychloroquine was first used as a treatment for malaria. It has an effect on the messaging system between cells in the immune system and can interrupt the inflammatory response.

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## Leflunomide

Leflunomide is a disease modifying anti rheumatic drug (DMARD) developed specifically to control inflammatory arthritis.

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