

Resource

## Possible complications and related conditions

There are two main ways in which other health conditions can be related to rheumatoid arthritis. The first is conditions that have symptoms in common with RA. These conditions may be suspected or may need to be ruled out when someone is in the process of getting a diagnosis of RA. The second is conditions that people with RA are more susceptible to; a complication of RA.

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### Similar conditions

The word 'arthritis' means 'inflammation of the joints' and there are over 200 forms of arthritis, of which RA is just one. Many of the symptoms, such as joint pains and swelling can be similar in various types of arthritis, but there may also be differences in some of the symptoms, how they manifest themselves and what has caused the arthritis. Your healthcare team may have ruled out other types of arthritis, such as the most common form (osteoarthritis, which is caused by wear-and-tear) before giving you a diagnosis of RA. There are also other conditions, which may not come under the category of arthritis, but could have similar symptoms, such as other auto-immune conditions or conditions that cause pain to the soft tissue, but may also impact on the joints.

### Conditions that people with RA are more susceptible to

RA can affect multiple joints in the body, but it can also affect areas outside the joints, such as internal organs, nerves, blood vessels and muscles, which can, in turn, cause other conditions. For example, if the blood vessels become swollen due to RA, this is a related condition and complication of RA known as vasculitis.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an auto-immune condition, meaning that the body's immune system, instead of fighting off infections is attacking healthy tissue, in this case in the lining of the joints. When someone has an auto-immune condition, they can be more susceptible to others.

Sjögren's syndrome is a condition that people with RA are more susceptible to than the general population. It is sometimes referred to as 'dry eye' syndrome but can cause dryness of other bodily fluids, including the mouth and vagina. Treatments can be given to improve the symptoms of this condition.

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## Cardiovascular risk and RA

It is well established that patients with RA have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart attacks and strokes. A number of guidelines on the management of RA recommend screening for CVD risk.

Article

## The effects of RA on the lungs

The lungs can be affected in RA through the RA itself, or as an effect from treatment given for RA.

Article

## How is lifespan affected by RA?

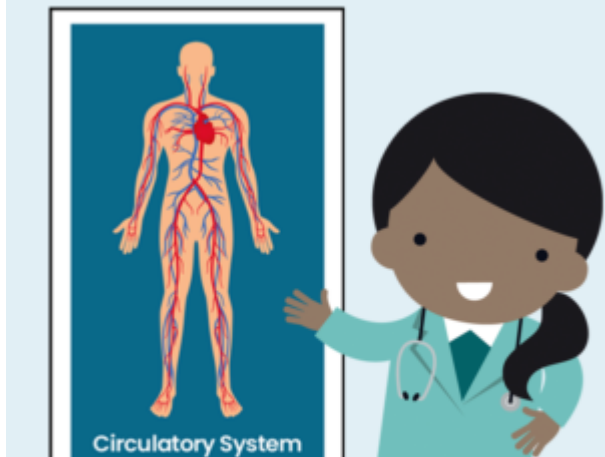
Complications such as lung complications and heart disease can have an impact on lifespan for RA patients. However, with earlier diagnosis and new therapies, this impact is decreasing.



Article

## Rheumatoid nodules

Rheumatoid nodules are firm lumps that appear under the skin in up to 20% of patients with RA. They are most commonly found on the fingers and wrists, which are subject to trauma, such as the finger joints and wrists.



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## [Rheumatoid vasculitis](#)



[sels are inflamed. The severity of this complication of RA  
ood vessels involved.](#)

[Article](#)

## [Osteoporosis in RA](#)

[Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens the bone, making people more prone to fractures. People  
sis, especially if they have taken steroids for long periods](#)



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## Eye health and RA



eye problems, though the severity and type of eye problems are dry eye syndrome (Sjögren's syndrome).

## Article

### Felty's syndrome



on of RA, in which those affected have low white blood cell count. Felty's syndrome commonly occurs in patients who have severe RA.

## Article

## Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA)

JIA is the term used to describe types of arthritis that start in childhood (below the age of 16). In the UK, NRAS has set up a service called JIA-at-NRAS to help those



### Article

## What is adult-onset Still's disease (AOSD)?

Adult Onset Still's Disease (AOSD) is an auto-immune disease. The condition affects the joints and internal organs and has some symptoms and treatments in common with RA.

## Read more

### Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and Osteoarthritis (OA)

The word arthritis simply means 'inflammation of the joint'. The reasons for that inflammation, however, varies. In the case of osteoarthritis, the cause is 'wear and tear'. RA is an auto-immune condition, meaning that the immune system, normally there to protect us, is attacking healthy the joints.