

THE IMPORTANCE OF PEDIATRIC RHEUMATOLOGY

1 in 1,000 Children Develop Juvenile Arthritis

Children Are Not Just Small Adults. Their Bodies Are Growing and Have Unique Medical Needs.

Juvenile Arthritis (JA) is a term used to describe a group of long-lasting, chronic, inflammatory diseases that affect children ages 6 months to 16 years old. It is estimated that more than 300,000 children in the United States are living with some form of JA.

Once diagnosed, it is important that the child begin seeing a rheumatologist. Please read the following guide to learn more about this medical specialty and the conditions they treat.

01 | Why a Pediatric Rheumatologist?

There are several reasons for children to see a pediatric rheumatologist, as opposed to an adult rheumatologist:

- They are trained to deal with the issues that can arise from the damage on growing joints and bones.
- The types of arthritis that are common among children are extremely rare in adults, meaning adult rheumatologists may not be well versed in treatment.
- Pediatric physicians are trained in making children and adolescents feel comfortable during examination and in complying with treatment.

02 | Pediatric Rheumatic Conditions

A pediatric rheumatologist evaluates and treats a variety of joint, muscle and bone disorders, including:

- Arthritis
- Autoimmune disorders (i.e. lupus, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, Kawasaki Disease, etc.)
- Unexplained occurrence of chronic musculoskeletal pain, weakness, poor appetite, fatigue and/or loss of function or skills
- Unexplained symptoms such as rash, anemia, weight loss or joint swelling
- Possible inflammatory disease

03 | When to See a Pediatric Rheumatologist

If your child complains of joint, muscle, bone or tendon pain for which your child's primary care physician or pediatrician cannot diagnose, they will likely refer the patient to a pediatric rheumatologist for further testing and evaluation.

To find a pediatric rheumatologist in your area, please visit: <https://www.rheumatology.org/Directories/Find-a-Rheumatologist>

Did You Know?

The most prevalent form of JA peaks between 2 and 3 years of age

References

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/health-management/pediatric-specialists/Pages/What-is-a-Pediatric-Rheumatologist.aspx>

<https://www.arthritis.org/advocate/our-policy-priorities/access-to-care/increase-access-to-pediatric-rheumatologists/>