

Treatment Overview for Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

We understand that when a child or adolescent is diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), the entire family is affected. At CHOC, we provide specialized JIA treatment and care so that rheumatic conditions don't put childhood on pause.

JIA is the most common type of arthritis in kids and teens. It usually causes joint pain and swelling in the hands, knees, ankles, elbows, and/or wrists but can affect other body parts too. In mild cases, the joint movement may decrease. In severe cases, there can be high fever, rash, and lymph node enlargement.

Although there is no cure for JIA, there are ways to keep it under control. The main goals of JIA treatment are:

- Slow down or stop inflammation
- Reduce pain and stiffness
- Prevent joint and organ damage
- Maintain joint function and movement
- Keep JIA in remission

Drug Treatments

There are several different medications that can be used to help treat JIA.

- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** to help decrease inflammation, reduce fever and relieve pain. Some common NSAIDs include ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Naprosyn, Aleve).
- **Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs (DMARDs)** are slow acting anti-inflammatory drugs. They tend to be stronger than NSAIDs and have more potential for side effects. They help slow the progression of JIA by suppressing the immune system so it does not attack the joints. DMARDs may include methotrexate, leflunomide (Arava) and sulfasalazine.
- **Corticosteroids**, or steroids, are anti-inflammatory drugs. They are used only for a short amount of time to help treat an acute inflammation.
- **Biological agents** are a newer class of drugs that are designed to target very specific steps in your body that causes inflammation. They can prevent and stop the progression of joint damage. On the next page are the biological agents we carry.



Patient Resources

CHOC Pediatric Rheumatology: www.choc.org/programs-services/rheumatology/

Arthritis Foundation: www.arthritis.org/diseases/juvenile-arthritis

KidsHealth: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/jra.html>