



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Joint inflammation that occurs along with psoriasis (a skin disorder). Psoriatic arthritis can affect joints in any part of the body. It usually affects finger joints, low-back, and neck joints in the spine. The disorder is usually mild and tends to begin between ages 30 to 35. It continues off and on throughout life.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Pain, swelling, limited movement, tenderness, and warmth in the affected joints.
- Psoriasis. Skin areas that are slightly raised, have red borders, and are covered with large white or silver-white scales. The areas crack and become painful. (Rarely, a person may have psoriatic arthritis without obvious signs of psoriasis.)
- Tiredness and fever (sometimes).

CAUSES

Unknown. It is thought to be one of a group of autoimmune disorders. In these disorders, the immune system by mistake attacks the body itself. Genetic (family) factors may be involved. In some cases, it may be linked to an infection.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Psoriasis.
- Family history of psoriasis.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

No specific preventive measures.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

There is no cure for this disorder. The symptoms often go away and then return. Symptoms can be relieved or controlled with treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- May progress to chronic arthritis and severe crippling may occur (rare).
- Drugs used in treatment may have adverse effects.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam and ask about your symptoms. There is no one test that will diagnose the disorder. Medical tests may include blood studies, joint fluid studies, x-rays, CT, or MRI.
- Treatment may include drugs, physical therapy, exercise, and self-care. Psoriasis therapy will continue also.
- Use heat to relieve joint pain. Warm soaks, heating pads, or warm compresses may help. If heat does not help, try cold compresses. Ultrasound or diathermy (heat therapy) may be prescribed.
- Splints for the affected joints may be recommended.
- Physical therapy can help with joint range of motion, flexibility, stretching, and muscle strength.
- In some cases, surgery may be recommended for severe joint problems or for joint replacement.
- To learn more: National Psoriasis Foundation, 6600 SW 92nd Ave., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97223, (800) 723-9166; website: www.psoriasis.org.

MEDICATIONS

- For minor discomfort, you may use nonprescription drugs such as aspirin (if over age 18).
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, cortisone injections into inflamed joints, and drugs to suppress the immune system may be prescribed to reduce joint inflammation.
- Drugs will be prescribed for psoriasis at the same time as treatment for the arthritis symptoms.

ACTIVITY

Rest during flare-ups, then resume your normal activities gradually. Exercise regularly to help keep your strength and flexibility. Swimming is a good exercise.

DIET

No special diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of psoriatic arthritis.
- Symptoms do not improve with treatment.
- Drugs used in treatment produce side effects.

Special notes:

More notes on the back of this page