# Arthritis: Rheumatoid Arthritis Herbal Program

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Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) includes arthritis (infectious, rheumatoid, gouty); arthritis due to rheumatic fever or trauma/ degenerative joint disease: neurogenic arthropathy; hydroarthrosis; myositis; bursitis; fibromyositis; and many other conditions.

According to the American College of Rheumatology, 4 of the following 7 symptoms indicate a diagnosis of Rheumatoid Arthritis:

1. Morning stiffness, lasting for at least an hour, present daily for at least 6 weeks
2. Arthritis of 3 or more joints, lasting for at least 6 weeks
3. Arthritis of the hand joints, lasting for at least 6 weeks
4. Symmetric arthritis, lasting for at least 6 weeks
5. Rheumatoid nodules
6. Positive rheumatoid factor (blood test)
7. Joint changes on x-ray

Rheumatoid arthritis is a systemic disease, meaning it affects the entire body. It is a chronic disease, in which various joints in the body are inflamed, leading to swelling, pain, stiffness, and the possible loss of function. The joint inflammation begins in the synovium. Continuous inflammation of the synovium slowly destroys the cartilage, narrowing the joint space and eventually damaging bone. The inflammatory process can also occur in other parts of the body. RA can cause anemia and affect the nerves. Sclerotic, an inflammation of the blood vessels in the eye can occur. The heart and lungs may also be affected. Twenty percent of the people with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) will never have a positive rheumatoid factor; you can have RA and have a negative rheumatoid factor.

**Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs.** Though they are commonly prescribed, the physical cost of years of pain management with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can be severe, even fatal! The New England Journal of Medicine reports that “anti-inflammatory drugs (prescription and over-the-counter, which include Advil®, Motrin®, Aleve®, Ordus®, Aspirin, and over 20 others) alone cause over 16,500 deaths and over 103,000 hospitalizations per year in the US,” according to a review article published in the New England Journal of Medicine.[1] Everything from stomach bleeding to intestinal damage to liver failure can result from the long-term use and interactions with what are known as NSAIDS, or Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs. Fortunately, herbs and glucosamine are not only safe and effective means of easing the joint discomfort of arthritis, but glucosamine can help to rebuild the cartilage. Rather than just focusing on treating the symptoms and covering up the pain, it is more sensible to get to the root of the problem and pay attention to the body.

**SUPPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

1. **JOINT COOL**: 2 capsules, 3 times daily.
2. **OPTI-EPA (FISH OIL)**: 1 capsule, 2 times daily.

Include: **INFLAM-EASE FORMULA**: 2 capsules, 3 times daily for "flare-ups" of inflammation.

**SUPPLEMENTS:**

**JOINT COOL FORMULA.** Herbal support for joint, connective tissue, and muscle health. This formula treats Rheumatoid arthritis, and it also fits the profile for fibromyalgia, with alternating fever and chills, and muscle tenderness with or without heat. Research indicates that bupleurum, a Chinese "release the exterior" herb, has antiviral, anti-inflammatory properties while also protecting the liver. Its active components are steroid-like saikosaponins that enhance the activity of cortisone and prevent adrenal atrophy. (Corticosteroid drugs are often used for autoimmune diseases.) Bupleurum is helpful to patients trying to wean themselves from prednisone-like medications. Ginseng and licorice appear to potentiate bupleurum. The antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of ginger have been used in Traditional Chinese Medicine for rheumatics since the fourth century B.C.

**OPTI-EPA (FISH OIL).** Opti-EPA™ delivers high levels of EPA and DHA, and is lower in saturated fatty acids than regular marine fish oil. Opti-EPA™ is strictly screened for the absence of any toxic metals and chemicals, and is completely free of cholesterol. In rheumatoid arthritis, there is an over-production of substances that trigger and sustain inflammation. Western diets are low in the long-chain omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA, which counteract the inflammatory effects of arachidonic acid. Our diet likely makes rheumatoid arthritis worse, and may contribute to the frequency of its occurrence. Most anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g., diclofenac) work by blocking the conversion of arachidonic acid to inflammatory compounds. However, these drugs can have serious side effects and may increase the risk of heart disease. EPA and DHA block the same pathways and reduce cardiovascular risk without harmful side effects. Fish oils affect more inflammatory mediators than non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs because they affect several enzymes

**INFLAM-EASE FORMULA:** Bromelain is a potent anti-inflammatory enzyme. Scientific evidence shows that bromelain (a proteolytic enzyme of pineapple) breaks down fibrin, a substance that builds up around inflamed areas, blocking blood supply. It has been shown to actually digest inflammatory compounds. Bromelain quenches inflammation at its source - the molecules that create it - and it is also effective in inhibiting prostaglandins. In an extensive five-year study of more than 200 people experiencing inflammation as a result of surgery, traumatic injuries and wounds, 75 percent of the study participants had good to excellent improvement with bromelain, a much higher rate than that afforded by drugs. Most of the people in this study were discharged from the hospital in only eight days - half the usual amount of time. They also experienced no side effects. The results of several other studies showed that this enzyme also reduces inflammation resulting from arthritis or sports injuries.

Turmeric has an active ingredient curcumin, which inhibits several inflammatory compounds including nitric oxide, interleukin -1, tumor necrosis factor, lipoxygenase and cyclooxygenase. Curcumin has antioxidant free radical quenching properties. These have unique anti-inflammatory properties with therapeutic action comparable to aspirin, but with important advantages in that curcuminoids prevent the synthesis of thromboxanes, causing redness, swelling and pain, and do not affect prostacyclins, important in the prevention of vascular thrombosis. The anti-inflammatory mechanisms of curcumin compare to those of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, phenylbutazone, but with no side effects. It has been proven to alleviate the symptoms of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, stomach pains and intestinal spasm.

Myrrh is an unusual combination of chemical compounds. Technically it is an oleo-gum-resin whose constituents include volatile oils, terpenes, resin acids, mucilages, and tannins. The resin is thought to be the most effective component in killing various microbes, while the tannins may be the astringent agents. Terpene compounds found in myrrh species have been shown to relax smooth muscles.

**DIETARY GUIDELINES**: Substitute red meats with fish and white meat; use soy based alternatives, decrease the number

**References:**

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**The statements contained in this article have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*