Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA)

What is Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis?

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) is a chronic immune-mediated disease that affects children and teenagers under the age of 16. JIA is progressive and, if left untreated, may severely affect a patient’s quality of life by inhibiting their ability to perform everyday tasks.

What causes JIA?

JIA is a disease of the immune system, which works to protect the body against threats like bacteria or viruses. But when the immune system is not working correctly – such as with JIA – it can mistakenly attack healthy cells and tissues.

Symptoms

JIA may be difficult to diagnose, because its symptoms are similar to other immune-mediated diseases. Symptoms must last for at least six weeks and may include:

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Rash
- Joint pain
- Joint swelling
- Morning stiffness
- Loss of appetite
- Eye inflammation
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- Joint swelling
- Morning stiffness
- Loss of appetite
- Eye inflammation

Other disease symptoms might include difficulty with daily activities such as walking, dressing and play.

Prevalence

JIA is the most common chronic pediatric rheumatic disease.

Affects nearly 300,000 children in the U.S. alone.

Affects girls two to four times more often than boys.

Treatment

Early diagnosis and regular visits with an experienced pediatric rheumatology team can help manage the complex needs of the child and family.

There are treatment options available that may help with symptoms and prevent further joint damage, including:

- Physical and occupational therapy
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- Steroid injections into joints

For moderate-to-severe cases of JIA, patients may respond to:

- Oral steroids
- Disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), anti-inflammatory medicines
- Biologic disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (bDMARDs) which are believed to interrupt the effects of substances made naturally by the immune system and improve physical function

JIA strikes at a time when kids want to be kids. Managing the physical effects of JIA is important but finding time for regular doctor’s visits can be a struggle for some families. Talk to your doctor about treatment options that are available at home.

Bristol Myers Squibb is committed to identifying and pursuing new treatment options and innovative development approaches to help deliver transformational medicines for patients with juvenile idiopathic arthritis and other immune-mediated diseases.