

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS PATHOCHART

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a chronic, systemic autoimmune inflammatory disorder of the joints. This could affect any joints in the body. A common sign is deformity of the joints, especially ulnar deviation of the hands. It causes weakness and pain in the joints, making normal ADL's difficult. RA requires long-term treatment with anti-inflammatory medications.



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ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Inflammation of the joints
- Joint stiffness
- Spongy joints
- Joint deformities - ulnar deviation of hands
- Chronic Anemia

DIAGNOSTICS

- ↑ Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate (ESR)
- ↑ C-Reactive Protein (CRP)
- + Rheumatoid Factor in blood
- X-rays of joints

NURSING PRIORITIES

- Promote Comfort
- Support Immune System
- Optimize Mobility
- Optimize Functional Ability

THERAPEUTIC MANAGEMENT

- Administer medications
- Heat/Cold packs
- Schedule rest times
- Range of Motion exercises
- Assist with ADL's
- Paraffin baths to ease joint pain
- Help patient identify and avoid triggers
- Arthroplasty (Joint Replacement)

MEDICATION THERAPY

- NSAIDs
- Disease Modifying AntiRheumatic Drugs (DMARDs)
- Corticosteroids