

## Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory arthritis that affects many tissues and organs but mainly involves synovial joints. The underlying problem is an inflammatory response within the joints which results in inflammation of the synovium and excessive inflammatory synovial fluid within the joint. This inflammation leads to destruction of the joint surface and ligaments around the joint resulting in pain, swelling, deformity and loss of function.

Rheumatoid arthritis is usually diagnosed from the history of symptoms and examination of the affected joints and by a number of blood tests. Approximately 1% of the world's population is affected by rheumatoid arthritis and it is three times more common in women than men. It usually develops in 40-50 year olds.

Nowadays there are some very good medical treatments that help control the inflammatory process and these are best discussed with your GP or a rheumatologist.

Many patients still require surgical procedures such as arthroscopy to remove the inflamed lining within the knee and treat damage to the joint surfaces and knee replacement.