

Speaking The Same Language

Before you speak with your doctor, it can be helpful to review some medical terms and definitions you may need when discussing your rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Use this glossary tool as a handy reference as you prepare for your next appointment.

Articular Cartilage

A type of connective tissue that covers the surfaces of bones at the joints, providing cushioning and allowing the bones to slide or move against one another easily.

Joint Damage

Joint damage from rheumatoid arthritis is caused by destruction of bone and cartilage and can result in joint erosion and joint space narrowing. If untreated or undertreated, rheumatoid arthritis can lead to permanent joint damage. Certain treatments may help reduce further joint damage.

Bony Ankylosis

A serious complication resulting in the fusing of bones together that can lead to complete immobility.

Joint Inflammation

Swelling due to the body's immune system response. In patients with moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis, inflammation is believed to be the cause of joint pain and swelling.

Synovium

A thin membrane that surrounds the joints and produces synovial fluid, which lubricates the joints.

Fibrous Ankylosis

An abnormal connection between the bones in a joint that can impair movement and lead to stiffness.

Pannus

Granulation tissue that can be caused by joint inflammation. In rheumatoid arthritis, this tissue can invade and erode cartilage and bone.

NEXT STEPS: Use these terms to help inform your next conversation with your doctor