

CPT Educational Group Rheumatoid Arthritis

Purpose: The purpose of this group is to educate patients diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis on signs/symptoms, management and treatment of their condition. RA is a systemic, chronic disease characterized by inflammation of the joint. Joints most often affected are knees, hands and feet. It is characterized by remissions and exacerbations. RA can affect any age including children but peak incidence is ages 35-45.

Admission Criteria:

- Free of isolation precautions
- Able to tolerate sitting for at least 30 min
- Diagnosis of RA
- Short BCAT 16/ACL of 4.0 or greater
- Stable Vital signs

Objectives/Goals

- Increased knowledge about RA and how to prevent and available treatment
- Patient will be able to verbalize safety precautions associated with RA

Suggested Materials List

- Handouts-print outs of attached materials
- DHI handout
- Anatomical models of joints to discuss effect of RA
- Print out pictures of healthy joints and joint affected by RA
- Adaptive equipment helpful with RA: Reachers, button hooks, adaptive eating utensils, etc..

Suggested Activities

- Discussion
- Presentation of material
- Shared stories

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Signs/Symptoms:

- Morning stiffness
- Fatigue and weakness
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Low grade fever
- Pain and tenderness of the joint
- Lumps or nodules under the skin
- Swelling
- Local warmth, redness
- Anemia
- Numbness, tingling in hands and feet

Measures to prevent rheumatoid arthritis:

- ❖ Adequate exercise
 - Always get a physician's approval
 - Exercise at a slow steady pace
 - Perform active or passive range of motion exercises
 - Never exercise a hot, inflamed joint
 - Balance exercise with rest
 - Set realistic goals
 - Stop exercise or activity if pain occurs
- ❖ Proper diet
 - Control weight to prevent increased pressure on the joints
 - Eat well-balanced meals high in protein, vitamins, and iron to promote tissue building and repair
 - Avoid quackery diets
 - Avoid excess sugar and salt
- ❖ Stress management techniques: Yoga, Meditation, Essential Oils/Diffuser
- ❖ Pain control
 - Apply heat or cold as ordered
 - Apply splints as ordered
 - Take pain medications as ordered
- ❖ Engage in social and diversional activities to promote emotional and physical well-being
- ❖ Use assistive and self-help devices to promote independence
- ❖ Keep follow-up appointments with physician and therapists
- ❖ Take medications as ordered
- ❖ Wear an identification bracelet

Possible complications:

- Falls

- Contractures
- Depression
- Dementia

Resources:

- Local support groups
- Counseling/clergy