

## Health News You Can Use

*“For your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit in you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own... You were bought with a price; therefore; glorify God in your body.” (1 Corinthians, 6:19-20)*

*The Nurse Corps features health news you can use on a monthly basis to promote wholistic health—physical, mental, spiritual, social, and total body wellness. Additional literature is also available to you outside Fellowship Hall. Feel free to help yourself to that literature.*

## JULY: Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

Juvenile arthritis (JA), also known as pediatric rheumatic disease, is not a disease in itself, but is an umbrella term used to describe the many autoimmune and inflammatory conditions or pediatric rheumatic diseases that can develop in children ages 16 and younger. Juvenile arthritis affects nearly 300,000 children in the United States.

Although the various types of juvenile arthritis share many common symptoms, like pain, joint swelling, redness and warmth, each type of JA is distinct and has its own special concerns and symptoms. Some types of juvenile arthritis affect the musculoskeletal system, but joint symptoms may be minor or nonexistent. Juvenile arthritis can also involve the eyes, skin, muscles and gastrointestinal tract.

There are six subtypes of JA: oligoarthritis, polyarthritis, systemic, enthesitis-related, juvenile psoriatic arthritis or undifferentiated. No known cause has been pinpointed for most forms of juvenile arthritis, nor is there evidence to suggest that toxins, foods or allergies cause children to develop JA. Some research points toward a genetic predisposition to juvenile arthritis, which means the combination of genes a child receives from his or her parents, may cause the onset of JA when triggered by other factors. Each of the different types of JA has its own set of signs and symptoms. The most important step in properly treating juvenile arthritis is getting an accurate diagnosis. The diagnostic process can be long and detailed. There is no single blood test that confirms any type of JA. In children, the key to diagnosis is a careful physical exam, along with a thorough medical history. Any specific tests a doctor may perform will depend upon the type of JA suspected.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for juvenile arthritis, although with early diagnosis and aggressive treatment, remission is possible. The goal of treatment is to relieve inflammation, control pain and improve the child's quality of life. Most treatment plans involve a combination of medication, physical activity, eye care and healthy eating.

An important part of JA treatment is teaching the child the importance of how to follow the treatment prescribed by the healthcare team. Self-care also involves helping the child address the emotional and social effects of the disease. Self-management encompasses the choices made each day to live well and stay healthy and happy.

Experts also say that eating a well-balanced diet is vital. Not only are you receiving critical nutrients, you are achieving and maintaining a healthy bodyweight. If you are overweight, you are adding extra pressure on weight-bearing joints. Keep sugary and/or fatty foods to a minimum - such as red meat, cream and cheese. Be sure that you are eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grains. Omega-3 essential fatty acids are also essential in relieving symptoms of arthritis. Common sources of Omega-3 fatty acids are sardines, herring, trout, and salmon.