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The website for the answer to all your Orthopaedic Questions

- **Orthopaedic Opinion Online** is a website designed to provide information to patients who have orthopaedic and musculoskeletal problems and are undergoing treatment.
- **Patient information** is provided in the form of downloadable information sheets.
- **Orthopaedic advice** and second opinions can be provided by our expert internationally renowned Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons.
- **Online review** of patients' X rays or MRI scans can also be provided and any proposed treatment plans reviewed.
- **Book a clinical consultation** with one of our internationally renowned consultant orthopaedic surgeons in Bristol or London.
- **Orthopaedic reports** can be provided for Injury or Accident Claims and Medical Negligence claims.

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Reactive Arthritis

Link - <http://www.arc.org.uk/arthinfo/patpubs/6034/6034.asp>

Key words: Arthritis, reactive arthritis, joint pain, joint swelling, NSAID's

Summary

This booklet is for anyone who wants to find out more about reactive arthritis. You may be suffering from the condition yourself, or you may have a friend, relative or partner who has reactive arthritis. It explains the main facts about the condition, including the main symptoms and how it is treated, and answers common questions about this type of arthritis.

What is reactive arthritis?

The term 'reactive arthritis' is used to describe inflammation (heat, pain and swelling) in the joints that can develop after you have had a bacterial or viral infection somewhere else in the body. Often reactive arthritis causes only joint inflammation but sometimes joint pain and swelling may be accompanied by symptoms such as red eyes (conjunctivitis), scaly skin rashes over the hands or feet, diarrhoea, mouth ulcers, and inflammation of the genital tract which produces a discharge from the vagina or penis.

Unlike rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis, reactive arthritis is usually a relatively short-lived condition that may last for up to 6 months and, in most cases, disappears completely leaving no problems in the future.

How do you know if you have reactive arthritis?

Pain and swelling, usually in the lower limbs (knees, ankles or toes), are often the first signs of reactive arthritis. Swelling may happen suddenly or develop over a few days after an initial stiffness in the affected joints. Other joints, including the fingers, wrists, elbows and the joints at the base of the spine (sacroiliac joints), can also become inflamed. In some cases the pain can be severe enough to need time off work, bed rest or even admission to hospital. Reactive arthritis can also cause inflammation of the tendons around the joints, such as the Achilles tendon at the back of the ankle. If both the tendons and joints of the fingers or toes are affected at the same time it can cause a swollen or 'sausage' digit. Conjunctivitis, a scaly skin rash on the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet (known as 'keratoderma blenorrhagica') or, in men, a sore rash over the end of the penis can also suggest reactive arthritis.

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