

Does Your Child Need to See a Pediatric Rheumatologist?

The Signs and Symptoms of Rheumatic Diseases in Children

The most common signs and symptoms of juvenile idiopathic arthritis and other rheumatic diseases include:

- Swelling and stiffness: Stiffness and pain may be variable, but are most often persistent. Joint pain, swelling, and stiffness are typically worse in the morning, after a nap, or after a period of inactivity.
- Pain: Your child may or may not complain of joint pain. The child may be unable to describe the pain or may be accustomed to the presence of pain.
- Protection or guarding of a joint: You might notice your child limping or trying not to use a certain joint. They might also have a decreased range of motion in a joint.
- Sleep disturbances: Your child might have difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Fever
- Skin rashes
- Thickening and tightening of the skin
- Fatigue: Your child may be reluctant or avoid activities they previously engaged in, because they feel tired or sore.

Rheumatic diseases affect each child differently, so your child may experience all or only a few of these symptoms. Some children experience symptoms for several months and other children may have symptoms for a few days. These symptoms can also vary from day to day and even through the same day. Symptoms can worsen or disappear without a clear reason. It is necessary for you and your child to work with a pediatric rheumatologist and pediatrician to improve and manage your child's symptoms.

If you notice these symptoms in your child, you should speak with your pediatrician. Your pediatrician may suggest that you and your child meet with a pediatric rheumatologist.