

## What's in a Name?

### *Names and Types of Childhood Arthritis*

Many families are confused by the variety of names for their child's condition: juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA), juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA), even juvenile chronic arthritis (JCA). There is more vocabulary when describing a child's arthritis, like systemic, polyarticular, oligoarticular, and pauciarticular. This article clarifies the different names and types of arthritis found in children.

In North America, the term juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA) has been favored since the 1940s. This term was used to distinguish between children that had a chronic form of arthritis and children with acute rheumatic fever, which is not a chronic condition. However, JRA is not an ideal name for the condition because it suggests that children have a form of adult rheumatoid arthritis (RA). This is incorrect. Few children have arthritis that resembles adult RA from a clinical or immunological viewpoint. JRA also describes only three types of chronic arthritis in children. However, the term has been a validated classification system and is still used in research and insurance databases.

Juvenile chronic arthritis (JCA) was the name used in Europe to describe childhood arthritis. The term "chronic" was preferred because researchers did not believe the term "rheumatoid" matched the actual condition. JCA has a similar classification system to JRA, but does not distinguish between spondylarthritides and psoriatic arthritis. The term JCA is not used often, because it has been replaced with the term juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) is now used worldwide and with increasing frequency in diagnosing patients. Idiopathic means that the cause is unknown. It is a broad, umbrella term for several conditions, but has clearer definitions for these conditions. It is an exclusion diagnosis that encompasses all forms of arthritis.

The following chart describes the group that created the classification term, when they began using the term, and the conditions that the term covers. All of the terms have onset of the disease occurring before 16 years of age. Only JCA and JIA include juvenile ankylosing spondylitis and juvenile psoriatic arthritis.

American College of Rheumatology (1977)	European League Against Rheumatism (1978)	International League of Associations of Rheumatology (1997)
<b>Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pauciarticular</li> <li>• Polyarticular, RF- negative</li> <li>• Polyarticular, RF-positive</li> <li>• Systemic</li> </ul>	<b>Juvenile chronic arthritis (JCA)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pauciarticular</li> <li>• Polyarticular</li> <li>• Systemic</li> <li>• Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis</li> <li>• Juvenile psoriatic arthritis</li> <li>• Juvenile ankylosing spondylitis</li> </ul>	<b>Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oligoarticular, persistent</li> <li>• Oligoarticular, extended</li> <li>• Polyarticular, RF-negative</li> <li>• Polyarticular, RF-positive</li> <li>• Systemic</li> <li>• Psoriatic</li> <li>• Enthesitis-related</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>

As seen in this chart, there are many specific conditions under the broad classification terms. The next table gives short descriptions of these conditions and definitions of commonly used terms.

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#### *Confusing Vocabulary in Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Classification*

This chart has basic descriptions of commonly used terms. These descriptions are not comprehensive. Only your healthcare provider can give you information on your condition.

Term	Description
<b>Arthritis</b>	Joint inflammation, which causes joint pain, stiffness, swelling, and decreased mobility.
<b>Asymmetric</b>	The joint on one side of the body is affected, while the same joint on the opposite side of the body is not affected. For example, the right knee has arthritis, but the left knee does not.
<b>Auto-immune Disease</b>	A disease where the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own healthy cells and tissues, instead of foreign antigens. This causes an inflammatory response. For more information on auto-immune diseases, see the handout <i>What is Happening in My Body, Understanding Auto-Immune Disease</i> .
<b>Cyclic Citrullinated Peptide (CCP)</b>	CCP is an antibody, like RF ( <i>see Rheumatoid Factor</i> .) A CCP antibody test may be ordered along with an RF test. CCP antibody tests are more sensitive and specific than RF antibody tests, but both tests are used.
<b>Enthesitis- related Arthritis (ERA)</b>	Enthesitis is inflammation of the entheses, the sites where tendons or ligaments insert into bone (for example, where the plantar fascia attaches to the heel.) The most common joints affected are those in the hips, knees, ankles, feet, and back. It is sometimes referred to as spondylitis.
<b>Idiopathic</b>	Arthritis has an unknown cause.
<b>Inflammation</b>	A protective tissue response to injury or destruction of the tissue. Inflammation is the body's way of destroying foreign invaders and breaking down injured tissues, although tissues can become inflamed for other reasons, such as with auto-immune diseases.

<b>Oligoarticular (Olio: few)</b>	See <i>Pauciarticular</i> . These two terms are used to describe the same condition.
<b>Osteoarthritis</b>	Arthritis caused by aging and “wear and tear” on the joint.
<b>Pauciarticular (Pauci: few)</b>	Few joints; pauciarticular JIA causes arthritis in 4 or less asymmetric joints. The most common joints affected are the large joints, like the knee. Children with pauciarticular JIA are at significant risk for developing uveitis.
<b>Polyarticular Arthritis (Poly: many)</b>	Several joints; polyarticular JIA affects 5 or more joints and usually affects the same joints on both sides of the body. Polyarticular JIA commonly affects small joints, like in the hands, but can also affect large joints.
<b>Psoriatic Arthritis</b>	Arthritis that occurs in children who have a 1 <sup>st</sup> degree relative with psoriasis, a chronic skin disease.
<b>Rheumatoid Factor (RF)</b>	RF is an immunoglobulin (antibody) which can bind to other antibodies. Antibodies are normal proteins that are in the blood and function as a part of the immune system. When RF positive, the arthritis is a rheumatoid arthritis. When RF negative, the arthritis is idiopathic and is not rheumatoid. Both conditions (RF positive and RF negative arthritis) will be treated by a rheumatologist.
<b>Spondyloarthritis (SpA)</b>	Arthritis that frequently involves the axial skeleton and can result in abnormal bone formation of the spine. Childhood SpA is classified as enthesitis-related arthritis.
<b>Systemic Arthritis</b>	Through the entire body; systemic JIA affects the joints throughout the body and can affect internal organs.
<b>Uveitis</b>	Inflammation in the eye. Many people do not notice any signs that they have uveitis until they notice a change in their vision. If the inflammation is not treated, scarring and problems with vision can occur.

#### References:

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