

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus * Multiple Sclerosis * Rheumatoid Arthritis



You Are Not Alone

Understanding Autoimmune Disorders

Autoimmune diseases occur when the immune system misfires and the body actually starts attacking itself.

The function of your body's immune system is to protect you against disease and infection.

In a healthy person, the immune system will recognize infectious organisms like bacteria and viruses as foreign invaders and attack them. But in some people, the immune system doesn't function correctly, and it mistakenly misidentifies healthy tissues as being foreign, and attacks them as well. This can lead to a variety of conditions like Multiple Sclerosis, Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, or Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Facts About Autoimmune Diseases

It's estimated that 5 to 8 percent of people in the United States are living with an autoimmune disease. And researchers aren't sure why, but the prevalence of autoimmune diseases seem to be increasing.

Systemic lupus erythematosus (lupus)

In lupus, antibodies made by the immune system attack the body, resulting in swelling and damaged joints and organs, joint pain, rashes, and sun sensitivity. Lupus treatments vary depending on how severe your disease is, but can include pain relievers, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), immunosuppressants, corticosteroids, and lifestyle changes — like reducing stress, avoiding sun exposure, using sunscreen, and making changes to your diet.

For more information go to: <http://www.lupus.org>

Multiple sclerosis (MS)

People who have MS may experience weakness, trouble with balance and coordination, problems speaking and walking, paralysis, tremors, and numbness in the extremities. There are a variety of medications that can help patients manage symptoms, treat flare-ups, modify the course of the MS, and improve function.

For more information go to: <http://www.nationalmssociety.org>

Rheumatoid arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is a type of arthritis in which autoimmunity causes the immune system to attack tissues in the joints, leading to muscle pain, joint deformities, fatigue, weakness, appetite

loss, weight loss, and sometimes confinement to bed. As with most autoimmune diseases, women are more likely than men to develop rheumatoid arthritis. However, unlike most other autoimmune diseases, the age of onset is usually between 30 and 50. Rheumatoid arthritis acts differently in different people; therefore, treatment options are custom-tailored to the patient and

are designed to relieve pain, decrease inflammation, slow down or stop damage to the joints, and

improve overall functioning.

For more information go to: <https://www.rheumatoidarthritis.org>

If you have an autoimmune disease, you and your doctor will work out a plan to manage it. Symptoms of autoimmune diseases often come and go, and they may flare up from time to time, which means the symptoms may come on suddenly, requiring immediate medical attention.

Join us at COH on Sunday March 26th to get more information and speak to people who are successfully live with an autoimmune disorder.

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