



## About arthritis

# What do you want to talk about?

Arthritis affects you. The disease has mayor consequences on your daily life, work and relationships. Talking about this with your doctor or nurse is not always easy but important. Medication can help you to have less trouble with these symptoms in your life. Together, you can look at which medication is available and which one suits you best. We call this Shared Decision Making.

Medication has its advantages and disadvantages. To make the right choice in type of medication, a number of questions are important to discuss: What is arthritis?, What types of medication are there to treat arthritis?, What do we know about medication against arthritis?, Who are you?, and How do you feel about medication? For each question, we have created a conversation aid. This conversation aid is 'About arthritis'. About aspects with regard to arthritis as a disease that are important to discuss with your doctor or nurse. That way you both know everything that is important has been covered.

## How to use this conversation aid?

Below are topics on 'About arthritis'. Check the boxes of topics you think are important and which you definitely want to discuss. Are topics, that you think are important, not included? Write them down for yourself.



### Complaints

- With inflammatory arthritis you have **inflammation** in 1 or more joints
- These joints can then become **swollen, warm, stiff, painful and sometimes also red**
- You **cannot move your joints very well**
- Complaints may also include: **fatigue, less energy, feeling feverish**



### Autoimmune disease

- Arthritis is an **autoimmune disease**
- In an autoimmune disease, your immune system **attacks your own body**
- Arthritis is a **chronic disease**: the disease does not go away
- You can **continue to have symptoms**
- Sometimes your **symptoms get worse**. Sometimes less so. It is difficult to predict



### Diagnosis

To **determine** whether you have arthritis:

- Your **joints are checked** for inflammation
- Your **blood** is tested
- X-rays** are taken
- If necessary, other **scans** are made of parts of your body



### Treatment

- By taking medication against arthritis:
- The **inflammation** reduces
  - The **symptoms** decrease
  - Your **immune system** is inhibited

Against the arthritis, you can also:

- Exercise regularly**
- Eat and drink healthy**
- Stop smoking**
- Relax regularly**
- Work on your sleep routine**



### Healthcare providers who can help you

- Rheumatologist and Rheumatology nurse**: treatment of arthritis
- Physiotherapist**: support in exercise
- Occupational therapist**: how to carry out daily activities
- Psychologist**: treatment mental challenges
- Pharmacist**: supplies medication
- Dietician**: advice healthy diet
- Podiatrist**: treatment foot problems
- Hand therapist**: treatment hand problems



### Other topics

- Does my arthritis put me at **higher risk of getting other diseases**?
- Is arthritis **hereditary**?
- What can I **do** against arthritis **myself**?
- How can I **get in contact with other people with arthritis**?
- Where can I find **reliable information** about arthritis?
- How can I feel **mentally** better?