



# JUVENILE ARTHRITIS

Juvenile arthritis (JA) also known as paediatric rheumatic disease, is a term used to describe the many autoimmune and inflammatory conditions or paediatric rheumatic diseases that can develop in children under the age of 16.

Most people don't know that kids get arthritis, but JA affects 6000 Australian children including babies and toddlers.

For full information on Juvenile Arthritis please contact Arthritis Australia.

**Before exercising always check with an accredited exercise physiologist.**

## Why it's important to exercise

Research has shown that physical activity can have a number of beneficial effects which can include reducing the loss of a specific protein (proteoglycans) which reduces cartilage damage, it can improve bone density and promote general bone health.

Exercise can also reduce the risk of obesity which can have an impact on the joints. Another very important point to remember is that exercise can be fantastic at improving children's mental health.

## Things to remember:

- Before increasing or introducing any specific physical activity consult an Accredited Exercise Physiologist for expert guidance.
- Children with JA can generally participate in sports without any negative effects.
- Children with JA can participate in impact activities and contact sport if their condition is well controlled and they are physically able.
- Children with JA should be encouraged regularly to be active to help their general well-being.

## Types of exercise recommended:

- Swimming and generally playing in the pool is a great way to get children active while having less stress on joints.
- Weight bearing exercises under the guidance of a professional such as an Accredited Exercise Physiologist should be encouraged to help promote bone health.
- Team sports should help children increase their social well-being but be aware that some children with JA have delayed motor skills so may not be as fluent at the sport as their friends.

### References:

Physical activity recommendations for children with specific chronic health conditions: Juvenile idiopathic arthritis, haemophilia, asthma and cystic fibrosis, Canadian Paediatric Society 2010

Find your local accredited exercise physiologist at [www.exerciseright.com.au](http://www.exerciseright.com.au)

