

# Inflammation In RA: What Lies Beneath

(NAPSA)—For the more than two million Americans suffering from rheumatoid arthritis (RA), joint pain, stiffness and swelling are more than just troublesome symptoms. For a person with RA, even the simplest daily activities, such as buttoning a shirt or opening a door, can be extremely difficult tasks. The disease can be disabling. One study showed that approximately 20 percent of patients are unable to work within five years of developing RA.

But this disorder does not have to be debilitating. The more you know about it, and the sooner you start treating it, the better chance you'll have to help stop the progression of joint damage associated with RA and maintain an active, healthy lifestyle.

In RA, the body's natural immune system starts attacking the healthy joint tissues. When the immune system mistakenly starts invading the healthy

joints, it leads to pain, swelling and progressive joint damage due to the underlying inflammation. Studies have shown that joint damage can begin to occur even within months of diagnosis, therefore, it is important for RA patients to seek an effective treatment as soon as possible.

Traditionally, therapies have focused on controlling the signs and symptoms of RA. However, there is now evidence that suggests that even if you are on pain managers, or products to slow down joint damage, your RA may still be progressing—causing further damage to your joints.

The good news is that the FDA has approved REMICADE® in combination with methotrexate, a commonly prescribed treatment for RA, as first line therapy, to treat patients with moderate to severe RA, who have not previously been on methotrexate. Now, these patients can receive the ben-

efits of REMICADE therapy without having to wait until methotrexate fails. REMICADE is a breakthrough treatment that works with your body's immune system by blocking a substance called TNF-alpha, which suppresses inflammation associated with joint damage.

“The goals of treating rheumatoid arthritis have evolved as we now have a better understanding of the role of underlying inflammation and joint damage,” said Orrin M. Troum, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of Southern California. “We're trying to block that inflammation in order to help stop joint damage.”

Patients being treated for RA should talk with their rheumatologist about helping to stop further joint damage before it takes place.

For important information and for full prescribing information, please visit [www.remicade.com](http://www.remicade.com).

## *Important Information*

*Many people with heart failure should not take REMICADE; so prior to treatment you should discuss any heart condition with your doctor. Tell your doctor right away if you develop new or worsening symptoms of heart failure (such as shortness of breath or swelling of your ankles or feet).*

*There are reports of serious infections, including tuberculosis (TB), sepsis and pneumonia. Some of these infections have been fatal. Tell your doctor if you have had recent or past exposure to people with TB. Your doctor will evaluate you for TB and perform a skin test. If you have latent (inactive) TB, your doctor should begin TB treatment before you start REMICADE. REMICADE can lower your ability to fight infections, so if you are prone to or have a history of infections, or develop any signs of an infection such as fever, fatigue, cough, or the flu while taking REMICADE, tell your doctor right away. Also tell your doctor if you have lived in a region where histoplasmosis or coccidioidomycosis is common.*

*There have been rare cases where people taking REMICADE have developed severe liver problems. Signs that you could be having a problem include: jaundice (skin and eyes turning yellow), dark brown-colored urine, right-sided abdominal pain, fever, and severe fatigue (tiredness). You should contact your doctor immediately if you develop any of these symptoms. Blood disorders have been reported, some fatal. Tell your doctor if you develop possible signs of blood disorders such as persistent fever, bruising, bleeding, or paleness while taking REMICADE. Nervous system disorders have also been reported. Tell your doctor if you have or have had a disease that affects the nervous system, or if you experience any numbness, weakness, tingling, or visual disturbances while taking REMICADE.*

*Reports of lymphoma (a type of cancer) in patients on REMICADE and other TNF blockers are rare but occur more often than in the general population. Tell your doctor if you have or have had cancer.*

*Serious infusion reactions have been reported with REMICADE, including hives, difficulty breathing, and low blood pressure. Reactions have occurred during or after infusions. In clinical studies, some people experienced the following common side effects: respiratory infections (that may include sinus infections and sore throat), coughing, and stomach pain or mild reactions to infusion such as rash or itchy skin. Please read important information about REMICADE, including full prescribing information, at [www.remicade.com](http://www.remicade.com).*