

Health NEWS & NOTES

Knowing Your Rheumatoid Arthritis: Unique Web Site Offers Insight Into Physical And Emotional Effects Of RA

(NAPSA)—Rheumatoid arthritis, or RA, is a debilitating disease that can have serious physical and emotional effects. It is important for patients and caregivers to understand all aspects of the disease, not just the physical symptoms. Now, with the help of RAliving.com, a unique, interactive educational Web site, RA patients can get to know and measure their disease in a new way.

More than two million Americans are living with RA, a chronic disease associated with joint pain, swelling and stiffness. Those with RA often experience struggles with daily activities.

RA can make tasks such as washing hair or getting dressed in the morning difficult. More than 80 percent of moderate to severe RA patients have trouble opening jars. In addition to difficulty with physical tasks, 90 percent of those with moderate to severe RA say the disease interferes with social activities.

Knowing and measuring how RA affects a person's physical and emotional well-being is important.

RAliving.com features the *SF-8™ Health Survey* or *8 Ways Quiz*, a scientifically validated survey designed to measure a person's quality of life. The quiz includes eight short questions that help healthcare professionals determine how someone with RA is doing in eight key areas, from pain to overall health to social functioning. The results of the

Fact: Over 90% of moderate to severe RA patients find their RA interferes with their social activities.



A unique Web site offers insight into physical and emotional effects of rheumatoid arthritis.

quiz are presented visually, in charts that show the person's physical and mental health as compared to the general population. People can take the quiz as often as they like to track their symptoms over time.

The Quality of Life Monitor, designed to rate how RA affects daily routines for up to four weeks before doctor appointments, is also available on RAliving.com. The Monitor can be reviewed at appointments to track symptoms.

Often patients think they need to live with the physical and emotional effects of RA. That's not always the case. Patients should continue to evaluate the effect their disease is having on their lives and talk with their doctors to ensure they are effectively managing their RA.

To take the *8 Ways Quiz*, sign up to receive *The Quality of Life Monitor*, or obtain additional information, visit www.RAliving.com.

RAliving.com was created by Bristol-Myers Squibb.