

Rheumatoid Arthritis Support Protocol

Clinical Protocol to Support Joint and Immune Health*



The Pathophysiology of Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a progressive, systemic autoimmune disease characterized by joint involvement and destruction of bone and cartilage.^{1,2} RA involves inflammation of synovial joints that are most commonly found in a symmetrical manner in the hands, wrists, or feet.¹ Symptoms of RA may include joint swelling and pain, morning stiffness, fatigue, weight loss, and myalgia.¹

The onset of RA is typically diagnosed between the ages of 30 and 60 years.¹ RA is two to three times more common in women.¹ Risk factors include family history, certain genotypes, smoking, exposure to certain toxins, dysbiosis, and a history of certain viral infections, such as Epstein-Barr virus.^{1,2} Changes in certain hormone levels have been observed in incidences of RA.³ Due to its progressive nature, early diagnosis and treatment of RA may help influence outcomes.¹

Natural therapeutics and lifestyle changes may support joint and immune health in the presence of RA and prevention. This clinical protocol is designed to support joint health and includes evidence-based lifestyle and dietary interventions for RA.*

Diagnostic Biomarkers and Clinical Indicators of Rheumatoid Arthritis

Diagnosis of RA is typically determined based on the American College of Rheumatology/European League Against Rheumatism (ACR/EULAR) 2010 criteria. Initial testing may include joint aspiration. Evaluation for other conditions related to joint pain and inflammation and its associated illnesses may also be appropriate.¹

- Complete blood count with differential
- Complete metabolic panel
- Rheumatoid factor
- Anti-cyclic citrullinated peptide antibodies
- Erythrocyte sedimentation rate
- C-reactive protein
- X-rays of significantly involved joints
- RBC fatty acid profile (EPA, DHA, AA/EPA ratio)
- GI-Microbial Assay Plus (GI-MAP)
- 25 (OH)D3: 60-80 ng/mL

Therapeutic Diet and Nutritional Considerations

- Correct nutritional deficiencies, particularly with vitamin D. Deficient vitamin D levels have been observed in many incidences of RA and autoimmune diseases.²
- Advise adopting a Mediterranean diet. Evidence suggests that higher intake of grain-fed red meat and salt may be associated with greater incidence of RA. Advise patients of the intake of polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly omega-3, which may play a protective role for patients with RA.²
- Recommend probiotic-rich foods or supplementation with probiotics. Changes in the gut microbiome have been associated with RA.²

Lifestyle Interventions

- Provide resources for smoking cessation due to a positive association with RA.²
- Encourage movement practices, as physical activity may be helpful in disease management and the improvement of quality of life.²
- Recommend stress management techniques, such as meditation or similar mindfulness practices. The incidence of psychological distress and certain mental disorders, such as depression, may be higher in the presence of RA.⁴



Supplement Protocol

Primary Support:



SPM Supreme™

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| Dose | 2 softgels per day |
| Duration | Ongoing |
| Formula Highlights | SPM Supreme™ is a combination of three highly potent “specialized pro-resolving mediators” designed to help support the body’s natural ability to respond to physical challenges and “resolve” the initial steps in the natural inflammatory process.* The “resolution” of a healthy inflammatory response is an active process controlled by these unique metabolites. |

ImmunoMod-A™

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| Dose | 2 capsules with lunch and dinner (4 capsules total per day) |
| Duration | Ongoing |
| Formula Highlights | ImmunoMod-A™ has been formulated to help balance a healthy inflammatory response, which is necessary to help maintain optimal immune function in the body.* It features ParActin®, an extract of the herb <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> , which has been shown to help modulate immune, inflammatory, and oxidative pathways. This product also contains the monosaccharide N-acetyl-D-glucosamine, along with curcumin, a polyphenolic compound extract from the spice turmeric. Both of these compounds help to support a healthy inflammatory response.* |

GI Revive®

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| Dose | 1 Tbsp powder per day on an empty stomach |
| Duration | Ongoing |
| Formula Highlights | GI Revive® is a comprehensive blend of nutrients and herbs that support gastrointestinal health, proper intestinal barrier function, and integrity of the gut lining.* The powdered version is sweetened with stevia leaf extract powder and can be mixed into any beverage or functional food powder. It can be used to support optimal gastrointestinal health and regularity.* |

ProbioMed™ 50

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| Dose | 1 capsule per day with a meal |
| Duration | Ongoing |
| Formula Highlights | ProbioMed™ 50 is a highly potent, shelf-stable, dairy-free probiotic formulation containing 50 billion CFUs per serving. It consists of 10 of the most highly researched and fully disclosed probiotic strains. It is formulated using delayed release technology and moisture-resistant, desiccant-lined packaging to help promote strain survivability to the intestines.* |

Vitamin D Synergy™, Vitamin D Supreme, D-Evail™ Supreme, or D-Evail™ 10K

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| Dose | Based on lab values, take 1 capsule or softgel per day |
| Duration | 8-12 weeks; retest 25(OH)D3 |
| Formula Highlights | These formulas provide clinically targeted amounts of vitamin D3 and vitamins K1 and K2 (as MK-4). Vitamins D and K are essential for optimal bone and arterial health and balanced immune responses.* |

OmegAvail™ Hi-Po or OmegAvail™ Hi-Po Liquid

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| Dose | 2 softgels or 1 tsp per day with a meal |
| Duration | 8-12 weeks; retest omega-3 fatty acids |
| Formula Highlights | OmegAvail™ Hi-Po and OmegAvail™ Hi-Po Liquid are omega-3 fatty acid formulas, providing 1,600 mg of EPA+DHA per 2 softgels or 3,000 mg of EPA+DHA per 1 teaspoon liquid serving in a 1:1 ratio while OmegAvail TG1000 has more EPA than DHA. These products are optimal for supporting the foundational needs of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) for long-term supplementation. |

For a list of references cited in this document, please visit:

<https://www.designsforhealth.com/api/library-assets/literature-reference---rheumatoid-arthritis-protocol-references>

Dosing recommendations are given for typical use based on an average 150 pound healthy adult. Health-care practitioners are encouraged to use clinical judgement with case-specific dosing based on intended goals, subject body weight, medical history, and concomitant medication and supplement usage. Any product containing botanical substances has the potential for causing individual sensitivities, appropriate monitoring, including liver function tests (LFT) is recommended.

For considerations regarding herb-drug and nutrient-drug interactions, please refer to reliable, evidence-based resources such as the Natural Medicine Database or Stargrove MB, Treasure J, McKee DLHer. *Herb, Nutrient, and Drug Interactions: Clinical Implications and Therapeutic Strategies*. St. Louis, MO: Mosby-Elsevier; 2008.

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*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.