

# The Importance of Pediatric Rheumatology

## Why Children Need Doctors Specifically for Them

### Did You Know

It's estimated that 1 in every 1,000 children develops some form of Juvenile Arthritis.

### BECAUSE LITTLE BONES AND JOINTS ACT DIFFERENTLY

#### July is Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

Juvenile Arthritis (JA) is a term used to describe a group of long-lasting, chronic, inflammatory diseases that affect children 6mo – 16 years old. It is estimated that more than 300,000 children in the United States are living with some form of JA.

Once diagnosed it is important that the child begin seeing a rheumatologist; because of a shortage of pediatric rheumatologists, less than 250 practicing in the US, it can be a long time before they see a specialist.

#### Why a Pediatric Rheumatologist?

- They are trained to deal with the issues that can arise from the damage on still growing joints and bones.
- The types of arthritis that are common among children are extremely rare in adults, meaning adult rheumatologists may not be well versed in treatment.
- Pediatric physicians are trained in making adolescence feel comfortable taking their medications.

With so few board certified and practicing pediatric rheumatologists, the American Academy of Pediatrics expresses its concern over the effects this has on children's treatment and lives. According to the academy, ¼ of children living with JA live more than 80 miles from the closest practicing pediatric rheumatologist!

The taxing nature of a limited amount of physicians doesn't solely fall on the families. The practicing doctor also feels the squeeze, often they partner with other physicians to carry the load. This is why recruitment and education are so important, this specialty required more exposure.

So speak up and be heard by promoting the importance of pediatric rheumatology for those with JA. Visit the Arthritis Foundation's advocacy page to learn about how you can help!

(<http://www.arthritis.org/advocacy/advocacy-priorities/pediatricrheumatologist/>)

### References

1. [http://www.rheumatology.org/Practice/Clinical/Patients/Diseases\\_And\\_Conditions/Arthritis\\_in\\_Children/](http://www.rheumatology.org/Practice/Clinical/Patients/Diseases_And_Conditions/Arthritis_in_Children/)
2. <http://www.arthritis.org/advocacy/advocacy-priorities/pediatricrheumatologist/>
3. <http://kidshealth.org/parent/medical/arthritis/jra.html#>
4. <http://www.kidsgetarthritisoo.org/about-ja/the-basics/what-is-juvenile-arthritis.php>
5. [http://www.the-rheumatologist.org/details/article/2196591/Pediatric\\_Rheumatologists\\_Increasing\\_in\\_Number\\_but\\_Still\\_Rare.html](http://www.the-rheumatologist.org/details/article/2196591/Pediatric_Rheumatologists_Increasing_in_Number_but_Still_Rare.html)