

Acute onset polyarthritis

- **Definition:**
 - recent acute onset (over days) joint pain and swelling with early morning stiffness and dysfunction, involving multiple small peripheral joints (hands and feet), with or without large joint involvement.
- **Differential diagnoses** to consider:
 - rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, connective tissue disorder, viral arthritis, crystal arthropathy
- **Urgent:**
 - contact with the Rheumatology Registrar at RGH or FMC if red flag features are present. If unavailable, contact the medical registrar on call.

Information Required

- Duration of symptoms: <6 weeks, >6 weeks, >12 months, >2 years
- Distribution of joints involved
- Associated symptoms: constitutional symptoms, photosensitivity, rash, raynauds, mucositis, respiratory symptoms
- Functional Impairment
- Treatments used/opinions sought thus far


Investigations Required

- Rheumatoid factor and anti CCP antibody titres
- ANA (titre and pattern must be included), ENA, dsDNA
- ESR, CRP, complement levels
- U&E's, LFT's, urate, CBP
- Ross River virus, parvovirus B19, Barmah Forest virus, Hepatitis C serologies
- Urinalysis

Fax Referrals to Rheumatology Outpatients

Flinders Medical Centre (FMC)	Fax: 8204 6105 (Clinic B)
Repatriation General Hospital (RGH)	Fax: 8374 2591 (GP liaison)

Red Flags

-  Evidence of systemic or major organ involvement

Suggested GP Management

- Symptomatic treatment with NSAIDs unless contraindicated
- Contact rheumatology registrar /rheumatologist on call before starting steroids wherever possible.
- In cases with dysfunction, oral prednisolone could be considered, doses >10mg not often required, dose <7.5mg daily preferred if to be used beyond 2 weeks

Clinical Resources

- www.rheumatology.org.au/community/PatientMedicineInformation.asp
- www.rheumatology.org and follow links to clinical practice guidelines

General Information to assist with referrals and the and Referral templates for FMC and RGH are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	August 2014	August 2016	Original