

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) is the name given to the many types of arthritis that affect children below the age of sixteen. As this is also a critical growth window for kids, JIA has the potential to negatively (and permanently) interfere with a child's growth and bone development.

CAUSES & SYMPTOMS OF ARTHRITIS IN KIDS

JIA is caused by the body's immune system attacking its own cells – much like other types of arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis. It is not currently known why JIA develops (hence the name!) but there is evidence to suggest that genetic history may make you more vulnerable – though it is not considered to be a hereditary disease.

Certain environmental factors (like viruses or bacteria) can trigger the disease to activate. There are many different types of JIA, each with different symptoms, prognosis and progression. Some of these types can be outgrown so the symptoms do not continue into adulthood.

arises spontaneously or
of an unknown cause

juvenile idiopathic arthritis

young person
aged under 16



joint stiffness &
inflammation

The most common types include:

- ✓ **Systemic** – meaning that it affects the whole body
- ✓ **Oligoarthritis** – which has four or fewer joints affected, and polyarticular – which has five or more joints affected
- ✓ **Psoriatic** – involves swollen joints resulting from psoriasis, an immune disease where healthy skin cells are mistakenly attacked by the body
- ✓ **Enthesitis-related arthritis** – involves inflammation of tendons and tissues near the joints, as opposed to the joints themselves

Most of the types of arthritis in kids include flare-ups of symptoms, where kids alternate periods of being symptomatic with being asymptomatic. This can be accompanied by common symptoms such as:

- ✓ **Swollen, tender, stiff or warm joints**
- ✓ **Joint pain, which tends to be worse in the morning or after rest**
- ✓ **Fatigue, tiredness or lethargy**
- ✓ **High fever and rashes (particularly in systemic JIA)**



HOW MASTERTON FOOT CLINIC HELPS CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARTHRITIS

While there's no cure for juvenile idiopathic arthritis, medical treatments focus on limiting the symptoms during flare-ups to help children live a normal life. This is a multidisciplinary healthcare team approach, achieved with physical therapy, medications and, in rare cases, surgery.

As podiatrists, our goal is to help children remain mobile and active while improving or maintaining their muscle and joint function. As kids love to run and play, it's important to help them keep up with their peers and participate in social activities wherever possible.

Every child under our care has a tailored treatment plan specific to their symptoms and how their arthritis is affecting them during and in-between flares. We'll help with:

- ✓ Monitoring your child's structural alignment in their feet and legs, which can degrade as a result of swelling in the joints or tendons, and which may not return to normal when the swelling dissipates
- ✓ Treating any gait (movement) changes caused by alignment problems
- ✓ Creating 3D-scanned custom foot orthotics to help improve stability, comfort and offload painful joints
- ✓ Recommend shoes to help your kids feel comfortable and promote movement with minimal pain
- ✓ Prescribe stretching and strengthening exercises, working alongside your physical therapist. Evidence suggests that children with JIA should still participate in 60 minutes of exercise per day, the same as other children

Our Values – We:



love what we do



challenge the status quo



are stronger together



aim to continuously improve



do what we say, sometimes more, never less