

My Experience with JRA

Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis or JRA is a term used for common types of arthritis in children. It is a long-term disease that causes joint pain, swelling and damage. JRA usually occurs before the age of 16.

When I was 18 months, I was diagnosed with JRA. My parents were very emotional and sad when hearing the devastating news. They felt scared, angry and felt that it was unfair that someone so young was so sick. My parents thought it would be the end of the world. They thought they would not be able to cope. However, when they saw my smile, heard my laughter and felt my beauty, they were hopeful.

At that time, I went to Sick Kids Hospital and got 2 cortisone injections in my left knee. Then at the age of 2, I got another 2 cortisone injections. I had to be off my feet for 4 days so the cortisone would work and spread evenly. It was difficult for me to sit still for all this time.

At the onset of JRA, some of the symptoms I experienced and at times still am experiencing are limping, stiffness, fever, knee pain, red, hot knee, and swelling of the joints. I would describe my pains as someone stabbing me. I feel kind of angry that I have to go through these kinds of pains that attack me. Some of the treatments that help are ice, Advil, cortisone injections and a medication called Naprosen.

I have been in remission for 7 years now. It is so much easier to be in remission because I don't have to go through all the uncomfortable pains and swelling. The injections have stopped for now.

For parents and children that are diagnosed with any disease there are many ways to cope. Be courageous, be positive, be happy, fight the pain, and have confidence in yourself. Life is a special gift that must be treated with love and respect. We must thank God for all the blessings of hope. We must thank all our special doctors and nurses for their help, support and knowledge.