

## I Have Rheumatoid Arthritis: What Can I Expect From My Doctor?

**Doctors now have a strategy that they use to get the pain, stiffness, and joint damage from your rheumatoid arthritis (RA) under control. Doctors strive for 1 of 2 possible targets:**

- Low disease activity: The disease is very mild; or
- Remission: The disease shows no signs of activity.

**Newer medications make remission or low disease activity very possible. Doctors can measure your disease activity several ways.**

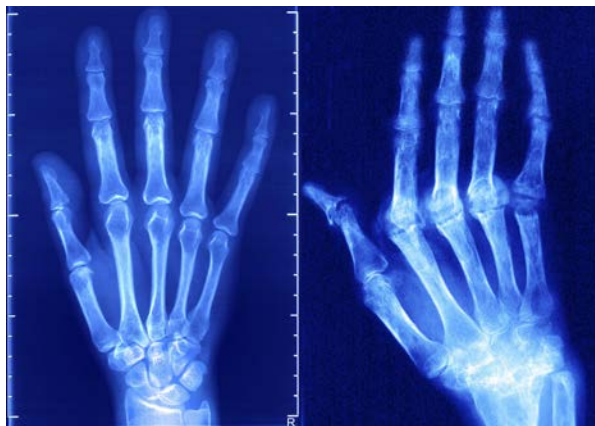
### How Do Doctors Measure Disease Activity?

Doctors can tell how much the RA is affecting your body -- called the level of your disease activity -- by using special measurement tools, such as the Disease Activity Score-28 joint count (DAS28), the Clinical Disease Activity Index (CDAI), and the Simplified Disease Activity Index (SDAI).

Using the score from these tools, your doctor may add to or change your medication until either your RA is in remission or you have low disease activity. This is called the treat-to-target strategy. To be most successful, regular monitoring by your doctor is required, typically at least every 3 months.

### What If I Don't Meet My Goal?

Your doctor will talk to you about changes to your treatment plan to help prevent or slow joint damage, lessen any pain you might have, and improve your ability to do simple daily activities. Without proper treatment, RA can seriously damage your joints over time.



**Normal hand joints.**      **Evidence of RA damage.**

### What Happens When I Meet My Goal?

Your doctor may talk to you about changing your treatment plan to keep you on target, which may mean you can reduce or stop some medications.