

Ask Your Compounding Pharmacist

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS AND OSTEOARTHRITIS?

The main difference between rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis is the cause behind the joint symptoms. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks the body's joints. RA symptoms include joint pain, joint swelling, stiffness, and pain of the hands, feet, wrists, hips, knees and can impact the heart, lung, and kidneys. Osteoarthritis (OA), also known as degenerative joint disease, is the most common type of arthritis. It is initiated by the breakdown of joint cartilage leading bones to rub against each other, which causes stiffness, pain and loss of movement in the joint. OA is usually a consequence of aging, but can also be impacted by factors such as obesity, genetics, and injury or overuse of joints.

TREATMENT

Treatment for arthritis may include medication, surgery, or non-pharmacologic treatment and is intended to control pain, minimize joint damage, and improve or maintain the patient's quality of life. The primary treatment for RA is medication including biologics, DMARDs, corticosteroids, NSAIDs, and analgesics. Treatment options for OA include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), analgesics, and steroid injections to treat the pain and inflammation.

Compounding may offer another option to relieve the pain of both RA and OA. Transdermal therapy incorporates multiple ingredients such as NSAIDs, muscle relaxants, anesthetics, and other appropriate medications into a prescription cream or gel that is applied topically to the affected areas. The medication penetrates the skin specifically targeting the pain and inflammation at the site. Transdermal therapy may also reduce the risk of adverse effects commonly experienced with oral medications such as gastrointestinal ulcers.

Do you have other difficult-to-solve medication questions that you would like our compounding pharmacist to answer?

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