Rheumatic Diseases, Psoriasis, and Crohn’s Disease

What does this handout cover?
This handout has information about rheumatic disease, psoriasis, and Crohn’s disease. It also has information on how these conditions are treated. In the pages that follow, please refer to the section that relates to you.

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Rheumatic Diseases

What are rheumatic diseases?¹
- Rheumatic diseases are lifelong diseases.
- They affect more than 46 million people in the U.S.¹
- Rheumatic diseases can cause pain, stiffness, or swelling.
- There are over 100 rheumatic diseases. Some examples include:
  - Ankylosing Spondylitis
  - Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis
  - Psoriatic Arthritis
  - Rheumatoid Arthritis

What causes rheumatic disease?¹
- No one knows for sure what causes it.
- It is believed that you may be born with a rheumatic disease but it needs something to “turn it on.”
- Some triggers, such as infections, can turn on some rheumatic diseases.
How can my rheumatic disease be treated?\textsuperscript{1}

- There is no cure for most rheumatic diseases.
- Rheumatic diseases are treated with rest, exercise, healthy diet, and medicine.
- Treatment may also include occupational and physical therapy.
- Pain relief methods and use of devices such as splints or braces are other ways of treatment.
- Serious cases may need surgery.

Psoriasis

What is psoriasis?\textsuperscript{2}

- Psoriasis is a lifelong skin disease.
- It affects more than 5 million adults in the U.S.\textsuperscript{2}
- Skin cells are constantly being replaced; this is called skin cell turnover.
- Skin cells turn over by moving from the lowest skin layer (where they are produced) to the outermost layer (where they die and flake off). Skin cell turnover normally takes about one month.
- In people with psoriasis, skin cell turnover speeds up and takes only a few days. The short turnover causes thick, red skin with silvery scales. The skin can be itchy and painful.

What causes psoriasis?\textsuperscript{2}

- No one knows for sure what causes it.
- Psoriasis runs in families.
- In psoriasis, the immune system is too active. This causes inflammation and fast turnover of skin cells.

How can my psoriasis be treated?\textsuperscript{2}

- There is no cure for psoriasis.
- Psoriasis can be controlled with three main types of treatment that can be used alone or together:
  - Medicines applied to the skin
  - Light therapy
  - Medicines taken by mouth or given as a shot.
- Psoriasis that is serious may need medicines taken by mouth or given as a shot.
Crohn’s Disease

What is Crohn’s disease?³
• Crohn’s disease is a lifelong disease.
• It affects more than half a million people in the U.S.
• It causes swelling of the digestive tract, also called gastrointestinal (GI) tract.
• The swelling can cause pain and diarrhea.

What causes Crohn’s disease?³
• No one knows for sure what causes it.
• Crohn’s disease seems to run in families.

How can my Crohn’s disease be treated?³
• There is no cure for Crohn’s disease.
• Treatment may reduce the signs and symptoms of Crohn’s disease.
• In the best case, treatment can lead to long-term remission.
• Treatment involves many different types of medicines and sometimes surgery.

Treatment of Rheumatic Diseases, Psoriasis, and Crohn’s Disease

What medicines are used for rheumatic diseases, psoriasis, or Crohn’s disease?⁴
Many medicines are available to treat rheumatic diseases, psoriasis, and Crohn’s disease. They help with pain and inflammation. Some medicines you take by mouth and others are given as a shot. One important group of medicines is called Biologic Response Modifiers (Biologics). Biologics are medicines given as a shot specially made from living organisms. They are used to slow the disease and prevent more damage.
How do I use biologics?4

Some biologics can be given at home, while others must be given at your doctor’s office. If you inject your biologic at home, carefully follow the instructions that came with your medicine. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about how to inject.

Biologics that are injected under the skin and given at home are:

- Cimzia® (certolizumab)
- Enbrel® (etanercept)
- Humira® (adalimumab)
- Kineret® (anakinra)
- Simponi® (golimumab)
- Orencia® Self-Injection (abatacept)

Some biologics need to be given by a health care provider. Some of these are infused into a vein. Some are injected under the skin or into a muscle. Listed below are the biologics that need to be given by a health care provider:

- Actemra® (tocilizumab)
- Amevive® (alefacept)
- Orencia® (abatacept)
- Remicade® (infliximab)
- Rituxan® (rituximab)
- Stelara® (ustekinumab)
- Tysabri® (natalizumab)

Why is it important to take my medicines?

These medicines do not cure your disease, but help slow it down. If you feel better and want to stop taking them, please first talk to your doctor. If you feel like your medicine is not working, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. It is very important to stay on your medicines, unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
What other important information should I know about biologics?

- If you are taking a biologic, you should avoid taking another biologic at the same time.
- Avoid getting vaccinations without first talking to your doctor.
- Please talk to your doctor before taking any new medicines, including herbals and over-the-counter (non-prescription) products.
- Tell your doctor if you have any symptoms of an infection or are being treated for infection such as cough that does not go away, chills, fever, and weight loss.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have injection site reactions such as bruising, rash, redness, and swelling. You can contact your OptumRx Pharmacist at 1-888-702-8423

Where can I get more information?

For more information on rheumatic diseases, psoriasis, Crohn’s disease, and biologics, please contact the resources listed in the tables below.

Table 1. Disease and Treatment Information

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases</th>
<th>The American College of Rheumatology</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 1-877-226-4267</td>
<td>Phone: 404-633-3777</td>
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<tr>
<th>National Psoriasis Foundation</th>
<th>The Arthritis Foundation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 1-800-723-9166</td>
<td>Phone: 1-800-283-7800</td>
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<tr>
<th>Spondylitis Association of America</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 1-800-777-8189</td>
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<tr>
<td>Web site: <a href="http://www.spondylitis.org">www.spondylitis.org</a></td>
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### Table 2. Medicine Information

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Phone Information</th>
<th>Web site</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actemra</td>
<td>Phone: 1-800-ACTEMRA (1-800-228-3672)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.actemra.com">www.actemra.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amevive</td>
<td>Phone: 1-866-263-8483</td>
<td><a href="http://www.amevive.com">www.amevive.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cimzia</td>
<td>Phone: 1-866-4CIMZIA (1-866-424-6942)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cimzia.com">www.cimzia.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enbrel</td>
<td>Phone: 1-888-4ENBREL (1-888-436-2735)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.enbrel.com">www.enbrel.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humira</td>
<td>Phone: 1-800-4HUMIRA (1-800-448-6472)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.myhumira.com">www.myhumira.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kineret</td>
<td>Phone: 1-866-KINERET (1-866-546-3738)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.KineretRx.com">www.KineretRx.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orencia</td>
<td>Phone: 1-800-ORENCIA (1-800-673-6242)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.orencia.com">www.orencia.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remicade</td>
<td>Phone: 1-888-779-9769</td>
<td><a href="http://www.remicade.com">www.remicade.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rituxan</td>
<td>Phone: 1-877-474-8892</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rituxan.com">www.rituxan.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simponi</td>
<td>Phone: 1-877-MY-SIMPONI (1-877-697-4676)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.simponi.com">www.simponi.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stelara</td>
<td>Phone: 1-877-STELARA (1-877-783-5272)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.stelarainfo.com">www.stelarainfo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tysabri</td>
<td>Phone: 1-800-456-2255</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tysabri.com">www.tysabri.com</a></td>
</tr>
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### References:

1. Living Well with a Rheumatic Disease. The American College of Rheumatology Web site.  

The information in this handout doesn’t replace the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment provided by your doctor. Always ask your doctor or a qualified health provider if you have any questions about your medical condition.