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# Laboratory Services

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CHILDREN'S®**

*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.*



# Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

## Diagnosis and Treatment Options

Arthritis is a common condition in children, affecting one in 250 kids. It is characterized by the swelling of a joint or by the loss of the normal range of motion of a joint accompanied by pain with movement. Pain alone in a joint does not mean that a child has arthritis. Arthritis, by itself, is simply a symptom of an underlying condition, just as a cough may represent asthma or pneumonia. In childhood, arthritis is usually a result of the body fighting an infection. The immune system, which fights infections, can often mistake the proteins and parts that make up our joints as the same material that is seen in types of viruses and bacteria. As our body fights the infection, there can be a short period of time when inflammation/irritation from our body is accidentally fighting against our joints. Usually, as the infection goes away the arthritis does, too. However, some children get a form of arthritis that does not appear to have a cause and instead of going away after a month or two, continues to affect the same, or more, joints. This is called Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA), with idiopathic meaning that there is no clear cause identified. Roughly one in 1,000 children have JIA. JIA is also from our body's immune system fighting against its own joints. In this situation, however, the body cannot shut off this process by itself. JIA should not be mistaken for osteoarthritis, which many older people can have. Osteoarthritis is from the loss of the protective covers on the bones at the joints, which causes the bones to grind on one another. Another misconception is that JIA is not rheumatoid arthritis. While there are many things that overlap with the adult form of rheumatoid arthritis, JIA is considered its own condition. In fact, JIA is actually a group of conditions that all share the same feature of arthritis.

## Types of Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

- **Oligoarticular** – Patients have four or less joints affected by arthritis. This is more common in girls and often begins in early childhood.
- **Polyarticular** – Patients have five or more joints affected by arthritis. This is also more common in girls and can start early in childhood or in teenage years.

- **Enthesitis Related Arthritis** - The enthesis is the place where muscles and bones come together. Patients with this form can often have pain along tendons. They are also at risk for arthritis of their back, called spondyloarthritis. It is more common in boys and usually develops in adolescence.
- **Psoriatic Arthritis** – Patients who have psoriasis, a skin disease, or with a parent or siblings who have psoriasis may develop arthritis. This is more common in girls and can occur any time in childhood.
- **Systemic Onset JIA** – This is very different from the rest of the types of JIA where high, daily fevers and rashes are also present. This affects boys and girls equally and can occur at any time in childhood.

## How is JIA Diagnosed?

Diagnosis is based completely on a physical exam performed by a pediatrician or specialist. There are no tests or labs that can be used to make a diagnosis of JIA, however there are labs that help assist with the diagnosis. Labs can help determine the amount of inflammation in the body or show risk factors for other complications, such as uveitis which is inflammation of the eyes. X-rays are helpful only to be sure there is not something else going on that can result in swelling, such as a fracture or tumor.

*Edward Oberle, MD Blog July 25, 2017*

## Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield Of Ohio Now In Network For Medicaid Plan

After a long period of negotiation, Nationwide Children's and Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield of Ohio have reached an agreement that places the hospital in network with Anthem's Medicaid plan. This agreement is effective as of June 2, 2023.



## No Poo in the Pool! Tips for Safe Enjoyment of the Water

Millions of families are dreaming of ways to beat the heat with trips to the beach, lake, pool or water park – this can be a fun and safe way to cool off. However, you might not be thinking about the germs often found in even the cleanest recreational water spaces. Here's what you need to know about what's in the water, and how to have fun while also protecting your family from getting tummy troubles, or worse.

One particularly pesky bug is Crypto (Cryptosporidium). It is one of the most common causes of diarrhea-related illness associated with all types of recreational water, even well maintained swimming pools. You get Crypto by swallowing contaminated water. Last summer saw an increase in the detection of this parasite in stools submitted to our lab for testing. This outbreak resulted in closing several swimming pools and a lot of unhappy kids!

### Keeping it Clean

Most of the time, public water spaces become contaminated through tiny amounts of fecal matter (poop) that kids, or adults haven't completely cleaned off of their bodies. Even a small amount of feces can carry millions of germs. It's always a good idea to shower before and after a dip to make sure you aren't carrying 'bugs' in or out. Remind your kids not to spit or swallow water accidentally or for fun. You may also want to invest in nose plugs since germs can get into the body that way, too.

### Different Germs – Similar Symptoms

Even treated water can harbor millions of microscopic parasites, bacteria and viruses – all of which can lead to severe diarrhea, vomiting and/or fever. While the symptoms may be very similar, the treatment can vary greatly depending on the cause. Rapid diagnosis is critical to prevent dehydration, so doctors will often conduct tests to determine what's causing the diarrhea.

**Nationwide Children's** offers a highly specialized molecular test that targets 20 common gastrointestinal pathogens that cause infectious diarrhea. Once the sample reaches the lab, results are available within about 2 hours, so kids can get the right treatment as quickly as possible.

### Chlorine Doesn't (Always) Cleanse

Chlorinated and filtered water can cut down on germs significantly, but it doesn't kill all of them instantly. Some types of "bugs" can live for minutes, hours or even days in chlorinated water. In water parks that share filtration systems, germs from just one person can easily spread from one side of the park to the other within minutes.

### Pool Diapers: False Security

Manufacturers won't claim that pool diapers can hold in all fecal matter – because they simply don't. Rather than rely completely on pool diapers or rubber pants – take your child on frequent potty breaks, check diapers often and never change a diaper pool side.

### SICK? Sit it Out

If your child has a cold, an open wound, diarrhea or has been vomiting – do not take her to the pool. It only takes a few germs in the water to pass an illness from one person to the next.

### Natural not Necessarily Safer

Oceans, rivers and lakes have natural appeal, but they can become polluted with sewage spills and animal waste, especially after a lot of rain. And of course, these water sources aren't treated with any disinfectants, either. Local state departments will often have a record of how clean local lakes and rivers are.

### When to Go to the Doctor

If your child has worsening or bloody diarrhea, a fever higher than 101°F, or vomiting that doesn't improve within 24 hours – and you've been in a public water space within the last few days – it's time to go to the doctor or **urgent care**.

*Amy Leber, PhD., Senior Director, NCH Clinical Laboratories, Director, NCH Clinical Microbiology*

## REMINDERS

### Warm Weather Reminder

Now that summer has arrived, it is important that samples placed in a lockbox prior to transport to the laboratory be maintained at the appropriate temperature. Samples that require refrigeration should be stored in the lockbox along with a refrigerated cold pack. Do not use frozen cold packs as this can freeze the sample.



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## How can Nationwide Children's Laboratory Services help your practice?

If you would like to become a client or learn more information about Nationwide Children's Laboratory Services, contact us at (800) 934-6575 or visit our website at **NationwideChildrens.org/Lab**. Would you like to receive the Nationwide Children's Laboratory Services Newsletter electronically? Please e-mail us at **LaboratoryServices@NationwideChildrens.org** and let us know!

Lab Account Representatives are available via email to assist with any questions or concerns.

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