

Joint Pain

1. INFLAMMATORY

- Redness, swelling, warmth, tenderness
- Morning stiffness >60 min
- Constitutional: fever, fatigue, malaise
- Synovial fluid: WBC >2000
- ESR, CRP
- Imaging:
 - symmetric/diffuse joint-space narrowing
 - Erosions
 - Synovitis on MRI/ultrasound

2. Articular vs Peri-articular?

(joint vs soft-tissue near the joint)

- Articular – pain with passive and active ROM
- Peri-articular – pain only with active

3. # of joints

- Monoarthritis (1 joint)
- Oligoarthritis (2-4 joints)
- Polyarthritis (5+ joints)

4. Acute vs Chronic

- Cut off is 6 weeks?

Common Associations

- Noninflammatory → usually osteoarthritis
- Monoarthritis → usually requires tapping
- Oligoarthritis, Acute inflammatory → gonorrhea, rheumatic fever
- Polyarthritis, Acute → viral infection or early chronic inflammatory
- Polyarthritis, Chronic inflammatory → autoimmune

Peri-articular

- Soft tissues (tendons, ligaments, bursae)
- Isolated involvement of tendon/ligaments → non-inflammatory or mechanical issue
- Fibromyalgia may also cause point tenderness of these structures
- Enthesis – site of tendon/ligament insertion on bone. Inflammation → spondyloarthritis
- Severe enthesitis → involvement of tendons/ligaments → sausage fingers (dactylitis)

General Differential

Non-Inflammatory

- Osteoarthritis
- Mechanical derangement (torn meniscus or ligament) - hx of trauma

Inflammatory, Non-infectious

- Crystal (gout, hemochromatosis)
- Autoimmune

Inflammatory, Infections

- Acute – bacterial
- Chronic - atypicals (fungi, mycobacteria, spirochetes [Lyme])