

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

A.E. HAAS, M.D.

Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Rheumatoid Arthritis

There are two main types of arthritis. I will call them the type all people get with increasing age and the rheumatoid or disease type. We all get the old age type of arthritis. One form of this is osteoarthritis and is also known as degenerative arthritis. It is just a gradual wearing out of the joints. We all usually have this type or at least get it with increasing age. People like football players will certainly have those joints wear out even faster. More and harder use equals faster joint degeneration.

In my thinking the human body is designed to last a hundred years but anything you do to make it wear out faster will certainly shorten your life span. Or it will shorten the life expectancy of certain parts like your hip or knee joints in this case. Degenerative arthritis is only a problem of the joint itself. There is no problem with the rest of your body.

In rheumatoid arthritis however, there is a total body disease process. This is a crippling disorder and affects many body systems. As with scleroderma and with Lupus the body may actually be attacking itself. There is an internal immune disfunction. We do not actually know the cause of the disease. This type of arthritis affects about 1 percent of the population, mostly women. The problem is more frequent with advanced age. It can start up sporadically or run in families.

The heart, lungs, kidney, digestive system and even nerve systems can be involved with the disease process. Often the circulation system is impaired and healing any wound becomes a big problem. To make matters worse the treatment often involves the use of steroids that further impede healing and may increase the chances of getting an infection. These patients are often the most challenging to treat at our wound center.

Again, the two main types of arthritis are the diseased type known as rheumatoid arthritis and the type we all get, osteo or degenerative arthritis. The affected patients may look similar from the outside but have big differences with the internal disease process.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.
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Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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