

# Young women with rheumatoid arthritis at more risk for broken bones

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Women under 50 with rheumatoid arthritis are at greater risk of breaking bones than women without the condition, according to a Mayo Clinic study being presented at the American College of Rheumatology annual scientific meeting in Chicago. Men with rheumatoid arthritis also are in more danger of fractures, but that risk seems to surface when they are older, researchers found.

Rheumatoid arthritis can lead to chronic, debilitating inflammation of the joints and other parts of the body. People over 50 with the condition are more likely to break a bone from a fall or sometimes even mild stress such as coughing. However, little has been known about the [fracture risk](#) among rheumatoid arthritis patients under 50.

Researchers studied two groups of 1,155 adults each, all from the same community: one set with a new diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis, the other without the condition. Based on gender and birth year, each person was paired with someone from the other group, and the medical records of each duo were examined over time for new fractures unrelated to cancer or [severe trauma](#). In women and men with rheumatoid arthritis, new fractures were more likely than in their counterparts, regardless of their age when they were diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis.

Women under 50 when diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis were more likely than their counterparts without the condition to have their first new fracture even before age 50. While men with rheumatoid arthritis were also more vulnerable to fractures, that danger didn't grow until they

got older.

"Understanding what contributes to the risk for fractures for all with rheumatoid [arthritis](#), including young women, would help us better prevent them," says lead researcher Shreyasee Amin, M.D., a rheumatologist at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Women under 50 with [rheumatoid arthritis](#) need to know that even though they are young, they need to take greater care to prevent [fractures](#), she says.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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