



Finding the support you need

JUVENILE IDIOPATHIC ARTHRITIS

All kids and teenagers need support from the important people in their lives. When something goes wrong, or when things are hard, you need even more support. That is why it is important that kids with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) know how to find the support that they need. Research shows that kids who get enough support feel happier, better about themselves, and more able to manage the stresses that come with having JIA.

Ideas about where to find support

- Your parents are your most important support. Parents can support you by giving you a hug, talking to you about what's bothering you, or talking to your teachers or doctors to fix problems that come up. They also help with practical things, like taking you to appointments and helping you with your exercises. Parents are the best resource, and the easiest to find. Don't forget to ask them when you need help with something.
- Friends are also really important for support. They can talk to you about what's bothering you, or about other things that make you laugh and take your mind off your problems. They can sometimes also help in practical ways, like carrying things or picking things up for you if that is hard. A great idea is to ask your friends to sit down with you if you need to rest. That way, you get to rest and hang out at the same time!
- Your grandparents and other relatives can be a big support. These people are often really good at listening when you're down, or taking you out for special 'treats' or outings to cheer you up. Spending time with them regularly will help you to get closer to them, so they can support you more.
- Other adults in your life can also be helpful. They may be able to help if you need something and your parents aren't around, or you might be able to talk to them about things you don't feel comfortable asking your parents about. People like teachers, your school counsellor, a sports coach or Scout leader, your friends' parents, or family friends are good places to look for support.
- Your rheumatologist, rheumatology nurse, physiotherapist, OT, or anyone else in your health care team are good people to ask for information and advice about JIA and how it affects your life.
- Support groups like Arthritis Victoria and the CHIPS program can also help with information, and they are great places to meet other kids with JIA. These kids are great people to support you, because they are going through the same sorts of things as you. You can get involved with kids groups, family days or camps with other kids with health conditions.

These are only a few ideas, you may be able to think of lots more ways you could get help and support from other people. The main thing is that you ask people for the support you need. No one will think this is weird – everyone needs support at times, and if you tell people about your arthritis, it is likely that they will want to help you if they can.

REMEMBER, IT IS OK TO NEED SUPPORT!

Notes
