Rheumatic diseases are much more than the aches and pains of getting older. More than 54 million Americans—young and old—live with painful, debilitating and life-threatening rheumatic diseases. That includes an estimated 300,000 children who have some type of juvenile arthritis.¹

There are many types of rheumatic diseases. “Arthritis” is often used as an umbrella term to describe more than 100 rheumatic diseases and conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis (RA), gout, lupus, Sjögren’s syndrome, ankylosing spondylitis and juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 78 million Americans will have doctor-diagnosed arthritis by 2040.²

Symptoms of rheumatic diseases vary depending on the individual and the disease, but may include joint or muscle pain, inflammation, swelling, redness or stiffness; eye irritation and inflammation; general fatigue, malaise and fevers; hair loss; dry eyes or mouth; chest pain; and seizures or stroke.

Individuals living with rheumatic diseases may be at increased risk of depression, anxiety and memory loss; cancer; heart disease, heart attack, heart failure and abnormal heart rhythms; kidney failure and diabetes; eye irritation and inflammation; lung diseases and pulmonary fibrosis; aorta aneurysms; skin hardening or psoriasis; miscarriages or stillbirths; anemia; and nerve compression or peripheral neuropathy. For more information, see the fact sheet, “Arthritis Does That?”

Rheumatic diseases are the leading cause of disability in the United States. In fact, inflammatory rheumatic diseases cause more disability in America than heart disease, cancer or diabetes.

While there is no cure for rheumatic disease, early intervention and treatment from a rheumatologist can help patients manage symptoms and maintain a normal quality of life.

² [https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/arthritis-related-stats.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/arthritis-related-stats.htm)