

EULAR
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Kilchberg,
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NEW: LIFESTYLE RECOMMENDATIONS

EULAR has released new recommendations to support lifestyle choices and help prevent the progression of rheumatic disease

EULAR, the European Alliance of Associations of Rheumatology has written new evidence-based recommendations aimed at supporting healthy lifestyle choices and encouraging work participation in people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). While some RMDs can be treated with drugs, this is not the case for all, and many people look for information about how they can modify their lifestyle or behaviours to help improve symptoms and prevent disease progression. These should be viewed as an integral part of management for people with RMDs, and should be regularly discussed in clinical practice.

In general, all adults should aim for a healthy, balanced diet and should take regular physical exercise. However, there is variation in the advice that is given for people with RMDs – and traditionally much of it has not been evidence-based. To address this gap, a EULAR taskforce was set up to gather the available evidence and develop new advice. The taskforce included health professionals in rheumatology, geriatricians, epidemiologists, public health experts, people with RMDs, and exposure domain experts. Six key lifestyle exposures were considered: exercise, diet, weight, alcohol, smoking, and work participation.

The resulting recommendations, published in March 2022 in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*, provide guidance for people with one of seven different RMDs: osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, axial spondyloarthritis, psoriatic arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, and gout.

Overall, there are five overarching principles and 18 recommendations. The principles define the importance of a healthy lifestyle, discuss how appropriate lifestyle modifications should be implemented, and put their role in context with medical treatments. Seven recommendations focused on exercise highlight the safety and benefits of physical activity on pain and disability, particularly among people with osteoarthritis or axial spondyloarthritis. For diet, two key diet recommendations emphasise the importance of a healthy, balanced diet for people with RMDs – advice which is in line with general recommendations for people in the general population. When considering both diet and exercise, people with RMDs and health professionals should work together to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Some specific lifestyle factors are highlighted, and these should be discussed in consultation with health care professionals. For example, although small amounts of alcohol are unlikely to negatively affect the outcomes of people with RMDs, people with rheumatoid arthritis or gout may be at risk of flares after even moderate alcohol consumption. In addition, smokers should be supported to quit since smoking can have an effect on RMD symptoms, in addition to the well-known general health impacts.

EULAR hopes these new recommendations will be used to guide shared decision making when developing and monitoring treatment plans for people with RMDs.

Source

[Gwinnutt JM, Wieczorek M, Balanescu A, et al 2021 EULAR recommendations regarding lifestyle behaviours and work participation to prevent progression of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases Published Online First: 08 March 2022. doi: 10.1136/annrheumdis-2021-222020.](#)

About EULAR

EULAR is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

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