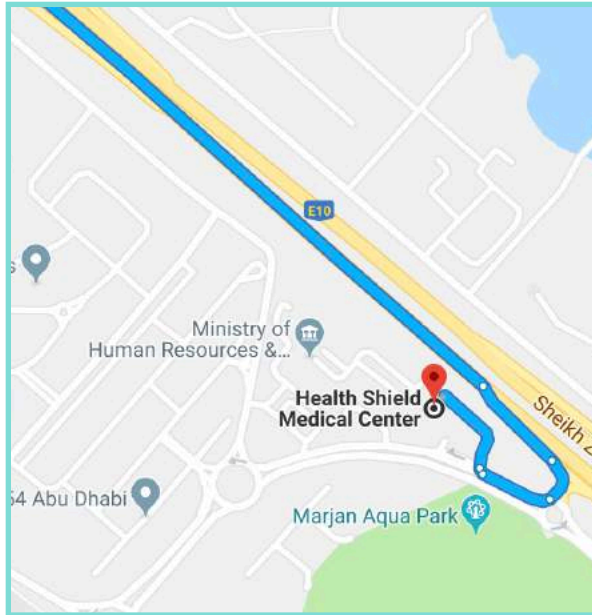


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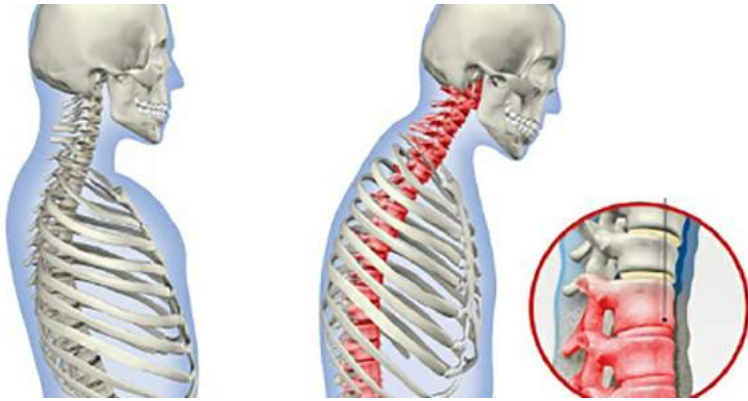
Ankylosing Spondylitis



Ankylosing means “joining” together, and Spondylitis means refers to “soreness” in the joints of the spine.

It is a painful condition most commonly found in men under 40 years of age.

What is Ankylosing Spondylitis?



Ankylosing Spondylitis is a condition that mainly affects the spine. The joints of the neck, back and pelvis become inflamed, causing pain and stiffness. In AS, soreness and swelling occur in the ligaments that attach to the bone. This swelling causes the bone to be worn away. As the swelling continues, the bone tries to heal itself. New bone grows replacing the elastic tissue called ligaments. When this new growth occurs, movement becomes more difficult and stiffness occurs.

The parts of the body most commonly affected are the lower back, chest, and neck. Other joints can also be affected, including your hips, shoulders, knees and ankles.

What are the symptoms?

Typical symptoms include:

- Back pain and stiffness; this develops over weeks or 3 months at least.
- Early morning stiffness ; this goes away during the day with exercise.
- Feeling better after exercise and feeling worse after rest.
- Losing weight; especially in the early stages.
- Feeling weak and tired
- Feeling feverish and experiencing night sweats.
- Feeling severe twinges of pain in one leg or through the buttock.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will review your symptoms, give you a physical exam, and refer you to a specialist called a rheumatologist. The rheumatologist may take an x-ray of your back. They will look for changes to the joints in your spine or sacroiliac joints. In some cases a computed tomography (CT) Scan will be necessary. In a CT-Scan, x-rays will be taken of your spine from several different angles and then arranged to show a cross section view of your spine.



What treatments are there for SA?

Your rheumatologist will tailor your treatment to your symptoms and the severity of your condition. There is no way of predicting exactly which treatment will work best for you. Each treatment has its own benefits and risks. Your doctor may need to try several different treatments before finding the one that is right for you.

Treatment for AS usually involves:

- Physiotherapy Exercises (such as hydrotherapy or exercises in water), to keep the spine flexible and improve posture
- Medicines, such as:
 - Analgesics (pain relievers, such as paracetamol)
 - Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)
 - Corticosteroid medicines or injections
 - Disease-Modifying Anti-Rheumatic drugs (DMARDs)
 - Biological DMARDs.