

## **Mayo Clinic Minute**

### Understanding rheumatoid arthritis

<b>Video</b>	<b>Audio</b>
	Painful and swollen joints. Deformity in the hands.
<b>Eric Matteson, M.D. Rheumatology Mayo Clinic</b>	“Deforming arthritis is one of the signs of rheumatoid arthritis.”
	Dr. Eric Matteson is a rheumatologist at Mayo Clinic. He says rheumatoid arthritis is quite different from the more common osteoarthritis.
<b>Eric Matteson, M.D. Rheumatology Mayo Clinic</b>	“It's an autoimmune disease, which means that the immune system is overactive for some reason that we don't know and decides to attack the lining of the joints causing inflammation in the lining, which leads to damage in the joint structures, the cartilage, the bone.”
	There are medications to help slow the disease and offer relief pain but not a way to prevent it. Dr. Matteson says early treatment is important.
<b>Eric Matteson, M.D. Rheumatology Mayo Clinic</b>	“Rheumatoid arthritis untreated leads to severe joint damage. It actually shortens life expectancy.”
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Vivien Williams.