



# Speaking from Experience Young Adults with Arthritis

## Transcript for chapter 2 of 9: Diagnosis

**Andrew (diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis when at 14 years):** What led me to go to the doctor was a swollen finger. They didn't know what it was. They tested me for Ross River Fever, everything. I got sent to a paediatrician, who had the similar sort of arthritis, and he picked it from that and through blood tests.

**Kim (developed lupus at 23 years):** My knees were swollen and I couldn't walk. I was extremely tired and I'd lost about... well, I was about twenty kilos less than I am now. So I'd lost lots of weight. So I went to the doctor to try and find out what was wrong with me. It took about a month or two to have all the blood tests and for them to send me off to the rheumatologist. Once I was at the rheumatologist he told me what it was.

**Peter (diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis at 30 years):** I had an injury where I hurt my back and I was actually sent to hospital. The injury had me laid in bed for about three months. What occurred was, in the end I was going to lots of doctors and professionals to see what was actually wrong with me because I wasn't getting any better and I should've been. It wasn't until I chanced upon a GP who looked at my condition and looked at my symptoms and then came to conclusion to send me off to a rheumatologist where I was diagnosed.

**Sharyn (developed juvenile arthritis at 16 months):** The only story that my mum has told me is that I was in a pram and I wouldn't stop screaming. She tried to pick me up and get me walking on the ground and I would just collapse on the floor. That was really the only story that she has told me. And from that, it prompted her to go see doctors to get an answer.

**Sue (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 12 years):** I had a swollen thumb. It was just one joint and it just didn't go down for a number of weeks. I was playing a lot of sport at the time and I just thought it was a sporting injury. But my parents didn't, and took me off to the doctor. It didn't take very long for me to actually be diagnosed, because my father has rheumatoid arthritis as well. I think they sort of saw the signs.

**Heidi (diagnosed with fibromyalgia (FMS) at 22 years):** He did a few tests, looking at movement in my neck and in my shoulder areas. And also did some testing with pressure points, just basically rubbing his finger nail very gently down my back and down my neck, and played with some pressure points and told me that I suffered from **fibromyalgia**.

**Judi (developed rheumatoid arthritis at 27 years):** My husband thought it was quite funny. We were away on a holiday and I woke up one day and said "My shoulder's really sore." And he just laughed and said "That's because you've just slept in a strange bed and slept the wrong way." Then the next day that same pain, and I recognised that pain, was in my other shoulder, so I thought I was going a bit crazy. And I didn't tell him that it had gone to the other shoulder. And then that same pain I recognised was in my knee. And it when from there - this same pain was jumping around to different joints so that's why I went to the doctor.



**Heidi:** Just having a name for what was wrong with me was the biggest breakthrough that I got. Because I really started to wonder about my sanity levels really.

**Judi:** I went away just thinking "This is a disease that will go away. Okay, I know that there is something wrong with me at the moment, but it will go away. I'll just ignore it for a while." But then I couldn't ignore it, because the pain was too bad and I kept going back to the rheumatologist. Even though I was going to a rheumatologist, I was still thinking that it wasn't arthritis, because at that stage I thought that arthritis only affected the elderly.

**Kim:** I'd never heard of lupus before. And I didn't know whether I was going to live or die, or what was wrong with me.

**Sue:** When I was initially diagnosed, I didn't care really. I was a twelve year old and arthritis meant nothing to me.

**Peter:** You always get the feeling that nothing's ever going to be seriously wrong with you and then to find out you've got something that's chronic, that doesn't go away, it's a bit of a shock.