

Lactate dehydrogenase	Levels greater than 300 IU/L seen in rheumatoid arthritis, gout or infection
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Glucose	Less than half serum glucose level seen in infection or severe inflammation
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Crystals	Gout: monosodium urate—negatively birefringent, needle-shaped crystals seen under red polarised light Pseudogout: calcium pyrophosphate dihydrate—positively birefringent, rhomboidal crystals seen under red polarised light
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Appearance	Normally clear to light yellow
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White cells	Infection, gout, pseudogout, inflammatory arthritides (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, HLA-B27 associated arthritis)
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Red cells	Traumatic tap, traumatic or spontaneous coagulopathy related haemarthrosis
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Protein	Levels greater than 30 g/L seen in infection and inflammatory arthritides
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