



Towards Wellness Centre

Providing Solutions To Complex Chronic Health Conditions

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Arthritis is a way of referring to pain or swelling in the joints or joint disease. There are many types of arthritis and related conditions. Symptoms include swelling, pain, stiffness and decreased range of motion. Symptoms may range from mild to severe and may stay the same or progressively get worse over time. Severe arthritis can result in chronic pain, and be very disabling. Arthritis can cause permanent joint changes which may be visible, such as knobby or swollen finger joints, but often the damage can only be seen on X-ray. Some types of arthritis also affect the body's organs such as the heart, eyes, lungs, kidneys and skin.

Types of Arthritis

Degenerative Arthritis: Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis, it relates to aging or injury. When the cartilage wears away, bone rubs on bone, and this causes pain, swelling and stiffness. After a period of time, joints can lose strength and pain can become chronic.

Autoimmune and Inflammatory Arthritis: Rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic arthritis are examples of inflammatory arthritis. The immune system goes haywire and mistakenly attacks the joints with uncontrolled inflammation, and this potentially causing joint erosion and may damage internal organs, eyes and other parts of the body. Researchers believe that a combination of genetics and environmental factors can trigger this autoimmunity.

Infectious Arthritis: A bacterium, virus or fungus can enter the joint and trigger inflammation. It is important to treat the joint infection asap as it may lead to chronic arthritis.

Metabolic Arthritis: Uric acid in the body can build up and form needle-like crystals in the joint. This can cause sudden spikes of extreme joint pain, or a gout attack. Gout attacks may be sporadic or, if uric acid levels aren't lowered, it may become chronic, causing ongoing pain and disability.

Number of Americans With Severe Joint Pain Keeps Rising

[More info](#)

Note: Always seek advice from a doctor before beginning any listed treatments, medications or supplements.

Pain

Bio Medical Solutions

Analgesics: Are a class of drugs to help reduce pain but not inflammation such as paracetamol.

Opioids: are analgesics available by prescription. Opioids are very effective but they also carry a greater risk of side effects, such as dizziness or drowsiness and possible addiction after prolonged use.

Biologics: are a newer range of drugs that have been successfully used to treat Rheumatoid Arthritis. Biologics are genetically engineered proteins originating from human genes, they target specific parts of the immune system that cause inflammation.

DMARDs: are disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs. They help patients with rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis and lupus. DMARDs help preserve joints by blocking inflammation and help prevent joint tissue being slowly destroyed over time.

NSAIDs: nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs interfere with chemicals called prostaglandins in the body, which trigger pain, inflammation, and fever. Some NSAIDs are available without a prescription at the chemist including ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), and aspirin. Prescription NSAIDs such as celecoxib (Celebrex), should be discussed in depth with your doctor so you can find the right option for you.

Other drug options: From the Arthritis Foundation

[More info](#)

Corticosteroid injections: are injections which reduce the irritation caused by bone interacting with bone, which is what happens when the smooth, cartilage interface wears away. Possible side effects from corticosteroid injections include nerve damage and thinning of nearby bone. The injections are formulated as slow-release crystals, patients can, in the short term develop irritation in the joint similar to gout.

Oral corticosteroids: have an anti-inflammatory effect and drugs such as prednisone have been used for many years to treat Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Synovial fluid supplements: When medications do not provide enough pain relief, a synovial fluid supplement may be injected into the joint. Synovial fluid is a solution that lubricates, protects and supports joints. Synovial fluid supplements can reduce joint cartilage damage and delay the need for surgery.

Surgery: When osteoarthritis causes extensive joint damage and produces severe pain, joint replacement surgery may be required. The two most common operations are hip joint replacement and knee joint replacement. Procedures replacing the shoulder, elbow, wrist, finger, ankle and toe joints are also possible in some cases.

Alternative Solutions

Physiotherapy: Physiotherapists can use heat or ultrasound treatment to relieve pain and relax muscles. They can also provide exercises to improve mobility, increase muscle strength, lower pain levels with the aim of improving function and maintaining independence.

Occupational therapy: If daily living becomes difficult, occupational therapists can provide advice on home adaptations and special devices such as handrails, tap or bottle turners, large pegs, tongs or other gadgets. Mobility equipment for more serious cases may include a walking stick or walking frame.

Body weight: Maintaining a healthy body weight helps to reduce stress on joints.

Professional Support: Working with a trained practitioner can assist you to develop skills to calm anxiety and can also equip you with knowledge to find your next steps towards wellness. Please ensure that you find a practitioner who understands how to navigate the territory of complex chronic health conditions. [More info](#)

Massage: can help to soothe sore joints and muscles, to ease anxiety or to improve sleep.

Tai Chi: An ancient martial art/exercise that has been used to help patients.

Mindfulness: Meditative technique that empowers people to deal with pain and stress of arthritis. Mindfulness is a set of skills for healing, intuition, insight, calmness, focus, resilience and hope that you can develop to counter the stresses that chronic illness brings. You can literally "train your mind to promote healing. Mindfulness has a positive flow on affect into every aspect of a person's life. For more info click [More info](#)

Acupuncture and Magnetic field therapy: have been reported to be effective in relieving symptoms in some people.

SAM-e (S-adenosylmethionine) acts as a pain reliever and has anti-inflammatory properties. It may stimulate cartilage growth and also affects neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, which may lessen pain perception. Best for Osteoarthritis.

Boswellia Serrate (Indian frankincense) has anti-inflammatory and pain relieving properties. It may help prevent cartilage loss and inhibit the autoimmune process. Best for Osteoarthritis.

Capsicum Cream: Can be used for localised joint or muscle pain. Use carefully and avoid broken skin as it can burn. Can be used for Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Tumeric: can reduce joint pain and swelling by blocking inflammatory cytokines and enzymes. Can be used for Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoarthritis.

Avocado-soybean Unsaponifiables (ASU) blocks pro-inflammatory chemicals, prevents deterioration of synovial cells, which line joints, and may help regenerate normal connective tissue. Best used in Osteoarthritis.

Cat's Claw (Uncaria tomentosa) is a natural anti-inflammatory that inhibits tumor necrosis factor (TNF), similarly to RA drugs. It also contains compounds that may benefit the immune system. It is suitable for RA patients.

Fish Oil (Omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA) blocks inflammatory cytokines and prostaglandins, and are converted by the body into powerful anti-inflammatory chemicals called resolvins. Can be used for OA, RA and Sjögren's syndrome.

Gamma Linolenic Acid (GLA) is an omega-6 fatty acid that the body converts into anti-inflammatory chemicals. Suitable for RA patients.

Ginger: has inflammatory properties and studies have shown it to be very effective in pain management. Can be used for both OA and RA.

Green Tea: contains compounds that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that may be helpful in combating joint pain.

Glucosamine helps keep the cartilage in joints healthy and also may have an anti-inflammatory effect. Natural glucosamine levels drop with a person's age.

Vitamins and Minerals: Arthritis patients should ensure that they have healthy levels of the following minerals and vitamins to reduce arthritic pains.

Boron - helps with bone health

Calcium - necessary for good bone health.

Magnesium - balances calcium within the body

Zinc - required for healthy bone growth

Manganese - is also necessary for bone growth. Do NOT take with calcium as they can work against each other.

Copper - Helps strengthen connective tissue

Germanium - Helps with pain relief

Sulphur - A lack of sulphur can cause deterioration of ligaments, cartilage, collagen and tendons.

Vitamin C - Research has found that people with the least amount of vitamin C in their diet were three times more likely to develop arthritis than people whose diets included plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Vitamin D - Your body needs vitamin D to absorb and process calcium. Getting sunlight and eating oily fish are good sources of vitamin D.

Anti-inflammatory diet: may help provide relief for some patients. More info [here](#)

Arthrography: is medical imaging used to help diagnose joint conditions and unexplained pain. This may include the usage of computed tomography (CT) scanning, MRI scan or fluoroscopy which is a form of real-time x-ray.

X-ray (Radiography) - Bone: Bone x-rays are quick and show bone fractures, injuries and joint abnormalities.

Blood tests: Such as the CRP, anti-CCP antibodies, and ESR can be used to help diagnose Rheumatoid Arthritis and other types of arthritis. Blood tests are usually normal for Osteoarthritis patients.

Synovial Fluid Analysis: Can help to diagnose both Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoarthritis.

Disclaimer: Information and advice shared by the Towards Wellness Centre is of a general nature and is not intended to replace qualified medical advice. The Towards Wellness Centre does not accept responsibility for any actions or treatments undertaken.

