



Osteoarthritis (OA)

Guide to Good Health

Healthy Living Guide

- ▶ Asthma
- ▶ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)
- ▶ Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- ▶ Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Hyperlipidemia
- ▶ Hypertension
- ▶ Osteoarthritis (OA)
- ▶ Osteoporosis
- ▶ Type 2 Diabetes
- ▶ Back Pain
- ▶ Chronic Pain
- ▶ Healthy Eating
- ▶ Healthy Pregnancy
- ▶ Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)
- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Smoking Cessation
- ▶ Stress Management
- ▶ Weight Management
- ▶ Bariatric Surgery

What is Osteoarthritis (OA)?

Osteoarthritis, also known as degenerative arthritis, degenerative joint disease, occurs when cartilage, the tissue that cushions the end of the bones within joints, breaks down and wears away. In some cases, all of the cartilage may wear away, leaving bones that rub up against each other.

Overview & Facts

- Osteoarthritis is one of the most frequent causes of physical disability among older adults.
- The disease affects both men and women. Before age 45, osteoarthritis is more common in men than in women. After age 45, osteoarthritis is more common in women. By age 65, more than half of the population has x-ray evidence of osteoarthritis in at least one joint.
- Osteoarthritis is by far the most common type of arthritis, and the percentage of people who have it grows higher with age. An estimated 33 million Americans age 25 and older have osteoarthritis.
- Although osteoarthritis is more common in older people, younger people can develop it - usually as the result of a joint injury, a joint malformation, or a genetic defect in joint cartilage. It is also more likely to occur in people who are overweight and in those with jobs that stress particular joints.
- As the population ages, the number of people with osteoarthritis will only grow. By 2030, 20 percent of Americans - about 72 million people - will have passed their 65th birthday and will be at high risk for the disease.
- Osteoarthritis affects only joints, not internal organs.



Causes

- Osteoarthritis often results from years of wear and tear on joints.
- Putting too much stress on a joint that has been previously injured, improper alignment of joints, and excess weight
- Medical conditions that can lead to osteoarthritis:
 - ✓ Bleeding disorders that cause bleeding in the joint, such as hemophilia
 - ✓ Disorders that block the blood supply near a joint, such as avascular necrosis
 - ✓ Other types of arthritis, such as chronic gout, pseudogout, or rheumatoid arthritis

Signs & Symptoms

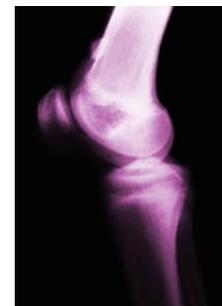
Signs

- Stiffness in a joint after getting out of bed or sitting for a long time
- Swelling in one or more joints
- A crunching feeling or the sound of bone rubbing on bone

Symptoms

- Deep aching joint pain that gets worse after exercise or putting weight on it, and is relieved by rest
- Pain that is worse when you start activities after a period of no activity
- Over time, pain is present even when you are at rest
- Grating of the joint with motion
- Increase in pain during humid or moist weather
- Joint swelling
- Limited movement
- Muscle weakness around arthritic joints

- Often, the cause of OA is unknown. It is mainly related to aging, but other factors can also lead to OA:
 - ✓ Family history
 - ✓ Being overweight
 - ✓ Fractures or other joint injuries
 - ✓ Long-term overuse at work or in sports



Risk Factors

- The chance of developing osteoarthritis increases with age. By age 65, half the population has x-ray evidence of osteoarthritis in at least one joint.



- People with joint injuries from sports, work-related activities, or accidents may be at increased risk of developing osteoarthritis.



Questions to Ask Your Provider

1. Is my osteoarthritis likely to improve on its own, or could it get worse?
2. What form of exercise would you recommend for my osteoarthritis?
3. Are there any changes I should make to my diet?
4. What pain medicine would be best for me right now?
5. Is acetaminophen sufficient for me?
6. Is it safe for me to take aspirin or an NSAID every day for osteoarthritis pain?
7. Is there something I should take to protect my stomach from these drugs?
8. Would a Cox-2 inhibitor be appropriate for me?
9. Are there any nutritional supplements that might help?
10. Can you help me set up a weight loss plan?

Diagnostic Workup

- To make a diagnosis of osteoarthritis, most doctors use a combination of methods and tests including a medical history, a physical examination, x-rays, and laboratory tests. However, x-rays are limited in their capacity to reveal how much joint damage may have occurred in osteoarthritis. X-rays usually don't show osteoarthritis damage until there has been a significant loss of cartilage.



- The doctor may order blood tests to rule out other causes of symptoms. He or she may also order a joint aspiration, which involves drawing fluid from the joint through a needle and examining the fluid under a microscope.
- No single test can diagnose osteoarthritis.



Treatment and Care

1. Medical

- Warm towels, hot packs, a warm bath or shower and cold packs such as a bag of ice or frozen vegetables wrapped in a towel can relieve pain or numb the sore area.
- Some people use canes and splints to protect and to take pressure off the joints. Splints or braces are used to provide extra support for weakened joints.



- For some people, surgery helps relieve the pain and disability of osteoarthritis. A doctor may perform surgery to smooth out, fuse, or reposition bones, or to replace joints.

2. Pharmacological

- If acetaminophen does not relieve pain, then non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen and naproxen may be used. Some NSAIDs are available over the counter, while more than a dozen others, including a subclass called COX-2 inhibitors, are available only with a prescription. Corticosteroids, hyaluronic acid, and topical creams are also used.

Treatment and Care continued

3. Emotional/Psychological

Living well and enjoying good health despite arthritis requires an everyday lifelong commitment. Following are six habits worth committing to: get educated, stay active, eat well, get plenty of sleep, have fun **and** keep a positive attitude.

4. Physical

Exercise is one of the best treatments for osteoarthritis. It can improve mood and outlook, decrease pain, increase flexibility, and help you maintain a healthy weight.

5. Nutritional

Osteoarthritis patients who are overweight or obese should try to lose weight. Weight loss can reduce stress on weight-bearing joints, limit further injury, and increase mobility. A dietitian can help you develop healthy eating habits. A healthy diet and regular exercise help reduce weight.



Healthy Lifestyle Management

Living well and enjoying good health despite arthritis requires an everyday lifelong commitment. Following are six habits worth committing to:

- ▶ Get educated: patient education programs
- ▶ Stay active
- ▶ Eat well
- ▶ Get plenty of sleep
- ▶ Have fun
- ▶ Keep a positive attitude

Other Lifestyle recommendations include:

- ▶ Applying heat and cold
- ▶ Eating a healthy, balanced diet
- ▶ Getting rest
- ▶ Losing weight if you are overweight
- ▶ Protecting the joints



Resources

- ❖ National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS): www.niams.nih.gov
- ❖ NIH Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases: www.niams.nih.gov/Health_Info/bone/default.asp - National Resource Center
- ❖ American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS): www.aaos.org
- ❖ American College of Rheumatology (ACR): www.rheumatology.org
- ❖ American Physical Therapy Association: www.apta.org
- ❖ Arthritis Foundation: www.arthritis.org
- ❖ WebMD: www.webmd.com/osteoarthritis - Osteoarthritis
- ❖ Medline Plus: www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics.htm