Arthritis

- Causes
- Diagnosis
- Medical treatment
- Surgical treatment

The Impact of Arthritis

Arthritis …
- Is the leading cause of disability among American adults
- Affects people of all ages
- Is second only to heart disease as a cause of work disability
- Costs the US economy almost $65 billion a year

Defining Arthritis

ARTH + ITIS = Inflammation of joints

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

- Caused when the immune system attacks the lining of the joints
- Can result in severe joint damage and deformity
- May also cause fatigue, weight loss and other whole-body symptoms
Osteoarthritis (OA)
By far the most common form
• Also called degenerative joint disease
• Usually begins after age 45
• Caused by breakdown of the joint's cartilage
  - Bones rub together
  - Joint loses shape and alignment
  - Bone ends thicken
  - Bits of cartilage or bone float in joint space
  - Pain, inflammation and stiffness result

Osteoarthritis Risk Factors
• Age
• Overweight
• Joint injury
• Muscle weakness
• Heredity

Arthritis Warning Signs
Signs to see your doctor
• Pain
• Stiffness
• Difficulty moving
• Swelling

Three Key Steps
1. A history (questions about your symptoms)
2. A physical examination
3. X-rays and other tests

Four Questions You Need Your Doctor To Answer For You
1. Is this arthritis, or is it something else?
2. What type of arthritis is it?
3. What can I expect from here on?
4. What can I do about my arthritis?

Arthritis Myths vs Reality
Myth
Arthritis is a normal part of the aging process. It’s just part of the wear and tear of getting older

Fact
Arthritis affects people in all age groups, and it is not a normal part of the aging process
Arthritis Myths vs Reality

**Myth**
Arthritis isn’t a serious condition. It’s just some minor aches and pains. It’s best to ignore it

**Fact**
Arthritis is a primary cause of disability in the United States. If left undiagnosed and untreated it can become a major health problem.

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**Myth**
Nothing can be done to relieve arthritis

**Fact**
Many steps can be taken to relieve the pain and inflammation of arthritis

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**The Options**
Non-medical therapy options
- Pacing activities
- Joint protection
- Exercise/physical activity
- Application of heat and cold
- Self-care skills

Physical therapy
Medication
Surgery

**Self-Care Skills**
- Learn all you can about arthritis
- Take an active role in your treatment
- Reach out for resources
- Seek support

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**Medications**
- Over the counter meds
  - "1st Generation"
  - Tylenol
  - Ibuprofen
  - Naprosyn

**Injections**
Limited Role in Arthritis
- Corticosteroids
- Viscosupplementation
Medications
• Prescription meds
  “2nd generation”

Medication supplements
• Glucosamine
• Chondroitin sulfate

Key Point To Remember
• Although there is no cure for arthritis, arthritis pain and discomfort CAN be managed and treated
• Your care may involve a combination of treatments
• Finding a treatment that works for you takes time. Don’t give up!
• Communicate with your doctor or similar healthcare provider. If your treatment isn't working as well as you think it should, say so! Many treatments are available

Physical/Occupational Therapy

Physical Therapy

Therapy Evaluation
• Flexibility
• Strength
• Stability & joint protection techniques
• Lifestyle
Flexibility

Evaluate Strength

Too Much Strength Exercise = Irritant

Daily Use of Hand and Wrist Is Constant!

DON’T OVERDO IT!
“Listen” to Your Hands…
Exercise Rules

1. Two hour rule
2. Pain greater than 3-4 (on 1-10 scale) during or after exercise

Stability

Splinting Can Help Instability

Joint Protection Techniques

- Use strongest or largest joints to do a task
- When lifting, scoop up using both hands
- Use entire body to move heavy objects
- Slide objects when you can
- Add leverage to appliances or when moving other objects
- Hold handles straight across the palm, not diagonally
Strongest/largest Joints to do Task

Scoop Using Both Hands

Use Entire Body to Move Objects

Slide Objects When You Can

Leverage is Good!

Hold Handles Straight Across Palm
Joint Protection Techniques

- Avoid using tight grasp
- Avoid pressure against the thumb side of fingers
- Avoid all pressures against backs of fingers
- Avoid tight pinch
- Avoid prolonged periods of holding same position

Avoid Using Tight Grasp

Avoid Pressure Against Thumb Side of Fingers

Avoid Pressures Against Backs of Fingers

Avoid Tight Pinch

Avoid Prolonged Periods of Holding Same Position
Pain Relief From Heat or Cold

Day to Day “Use” Suggestions

• Don’t get errands done on one day
• Pace yourself to prevent pain and stiffness
• Pre-activity warm-up and stretch

Remain Active Only
As You Can!

Nutrition

An apple a day never hurt anyone!

Surgical Options
Surgery

- Synovectomy - repairs joints by removing debris, fusing joints and/or correcting bone deformity
- Joint replacement surgery - replaces the damaged with an artificial one
What can you do now?

- Group classes in the pool
- Land exercise classes
- Self help home study

Question and Answers

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