



Arthritis

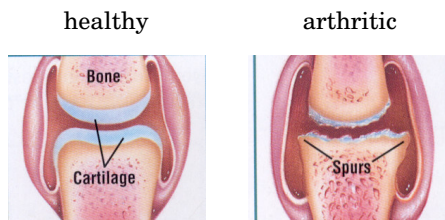
Back to Health Chiropractic

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The Pains of Arthritis...

Arthritis is a general term that refers to inflammation in any joint of the body. Although there are a number of different arthritic conditions, we will focus primarily on **osteoarthritis**.

Osteoarthritis is the most frequent form of arthritis with over 75% of the North American population, aged over 50, showing evidence of the disease. The condition involves a slow degeneration of the cartilage that protects your joints where bone meets bone. Synovial fluid which helps to lubricate the joint like oil on a wheel reduces its production. Aging, injury or trauma, poor posture and infection can cause joints to wear down and become stiff and painful.



In advanced stages, as they wear down, calcium deposits, spurs (bony outgrowths), and swelling may develop which can further restrict movement and cause pain.

Symptoms include: mild early-morning stiffness, pain that worsens with joint use, stiffness after periods of rest, restriction or loss of joint function, creaking and cracking with joint movement, local tenderness and swelling.

Current Medical Treatment

The most common medical treatment for arthritis is the use of Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs). You will be familiar with such medications as aspirin, Tylenol, and ibuprofen. Not only do these drugs merely mask the underlying signs and symptoms of the disease but they have also been shown to actually *increase* the breakdown of the cartilage leading to further joint destruction (Murray, Arthritis, pg 8). Other side effects associated with NSAIDs are gastrointestinal irritation, ringing in the ears, and fluid retention. More serious complications include kidney and liver damage.

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Special points of interest:

- Further information regarding Arthritis, Glucosamine and other natural treatments are available on our bookshelf
- Feel free to have a look or even sign out one of our books!

More Natural Treatments~ for prevention and healing

Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate- synthesizes new cartilage components necessary for joint repair~ *nature's best remedy for osteoarthritis!* Take with Vitamin C for best results.

Flax and Borage Oil- essential fatty acids are part of good nutrition. These are specifically important in regulation of pain, inflammation and swelling.

Ginger- affects the vascular system by increasing the circulation to arthritic joints, which helps to remove the irritating by-products of inflammation while allowing healing nutrients to re-enter the area.

Supplements- boron, calcium, magnesium, manganese, selenium, copper, zinc, Vitamin A, B complex, C, D, and E; are all nutrients required for synthesis of collagen

Chiropractic Care

An important step in preventing this debilitating disease is Chiropractic care of the articulating joints of the body. Due to the nature of this disease which causes pain and restricts joint movement, a Chiropractor is one of the best health practitioners to assess the joints, and make appropriate recommendations to restore normal function. The Chiropractic treatment program will include spinal or joint adjustment (to alleviate some of the symptomatic restrictions), exercise (stretching and strengthening), nutritional advice and other modalities. With less pressure on the joints, pain free movement can be restored!

Acupuncture

Arthritis responds very well to acupuncture treatments. Although joints often seem aggravated after treatment greater mobility is evident in a few weeks once the heat from inflammation diminishes, and the swelling slowly subsides. Dr. Rodwin chooses the points of needle insertion based on your health history and your specific condition. Acupuncture is based on the theory that energy or chi flows through your body along 12 meridians. Disease and pain are due to blockages of stagnant flow of chi. The specific placement of the needles is designed to restore this natural flow of energy.

Exercise...it can only help!

It may sound strange, but one of the best medicines for osteoarthritis is exercise. The right kind of exercise can ease your symptoms, help you lose weight, and help to take a load off your joints. It also improves immune functioning and enhances your overall health.

Exercise helps to keep joints healthy by:

- Encouraging the flow of synovial fluid into and out of the cartilage
- Strengthening the supporting structures (muscles, tendons, ligaments), as well as bones
- Increasing the range of motion, shock absorption and flexibility of the joint
- Prevents joint deformities
- Enhances sleep; reduces stress



Swimming is an excellent workout for all your joints!

Massage Therapy Treatment

After an initial assessment to determine the degree of degeneration, a Registered Massage Therapist can then set short term and long term goals for your treatment. In the early stages of degeneration, the focus of the treatment will be on restoring optimal joint usage. In a more severe case, the focus would be on maintaining tissue health and arresting the degenerative process.

A treatment program may include general relaxation techniques that increase circulation so that the joints are receiving adequate nutrition, maintenance of range of motion and the overall health of the surrounding tissues and joint play.

Active Release Technique (ART)

In treating osteoarthritis, Active Release Technique is best used in conjunction with one or more modalities and can easily be incorporated into a chiropractic or massage visit.

The stress that is caused by the wear and tear of your joints also causes the surrounding muscles to become very tight in order to protect and stabilize the structure. ART works to break up any adhesions that may be inhibiting full range of motion of the

Receiving therapy from a chiropractor or massage therapist will assist in preventing the progression of joint degeneration and loss of range of motion.

An exercise program for osteoarthritis should do two things: **strengthen** the supporting structures of the joint and **increase** the joint's range of motion.

There are many activities which will do both of these, however what you choose will depend on your level of flexibility and pain levels. Walking, jogging, bicycling and dancing are good for the leg muscles. Swimming and water exercises are an excellent overall body workout and are especially recommended when non-weight bearing activities are needed either due to an acute flare-up or too much discomfort. Slow and gentle stretching is the best way to improve your range of motion...morning, noon and night!

Any exercise plan should be designed or approved by a health care professional.