

Arthritis

BacktoHealthWellnessCentre

TwoCommonTypes

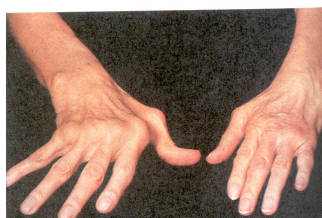
There are two types of arthritis that you may be familiar with. One is osteoarthritis and the other is rheumatoid arthritis. Although they can both be painful and debilitating the difference is that osteoarthritis is a degenerative disorder while rheumatoid is a systemic (affects the entire body) inflammatory disorder. Their pathologies are different as well as some of their clinical signs and symptoms.

The number one most common type of arthritis is **osteoarthritis**. This term is a bit of a misnomer as the suffix "itis" refers to inflammation of which this disease is not characteristically known for. There can be bouts of inflammation but it is not a process of the disease. What is characteristic of this condition is that it affects mainly weight-bearing joints such as the spine, hip and knees. The hands are commonly affected as well. Any joint can be affected and typically doesn't affect both sides i.e. only one knee may be affected, not the other.

Osteoarthritis can lead to loss of mobility and chronic pain, often causing significant disability. The cartilage of the joint is progressively lost and in trying to repair itself can form osteophytes or bone spurs. These changes lead to joint pain, stiffness, limitation of motion and sometimes joint instability and deformity. Stiffness is most noticeable in the morning and may seem to subside as the joints "warm-up".

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a systemic inflammatory disease that affects the joints bilaterally and leads to deformity. Women are affected two to three times more frequently than men. Although the cause of RA is still unknown, evidence points to an autoimmune disorder whereby the body produces an antibody called rheumatoid factor against its own immune system. Symptoms often begin in the hands and move towards the trunk with the fingers, hands, wrists, knees and feet being the most commonly affected areas. This can be a very painful and debilitating disease.

The treatment goals for a person with rheumatoid arthritis are to reduce pain, minimize stiffness and swelling, maintain mobility and become informed about their options for health care. The actual treatment plan should include rest, therapeutic exercises, alternative therapies and medication.



Progressive joint destruction of rheumatoid arthritis leading to instability of the joint and limitation of movement

November 2003

**Back to Health Team
Runs Another
Successful Year!**

Thanks to all those who supported our team in the Run for the Cure. We had a great day and were all overwhelmed by the amount of runners that took part in such a wonderful event.

[Help us help others!](#)

During the holiday season (which isn't that far away!) the Back to Health helps out families of Nelson House by providing gifts for less fortunate families.

If you would like to help out as well you can either purchase gifts or drop off used clothes, toys or books for children of all ages. A holiday gift tree will be in the reception area in December for you to leave your generous and appreciated donations.

ChiropracticCare

The degeneration of osteoarthritis can lead to subluxations of the joints. As the cartilage wears down the stability of the joint decreases causing it to move out of place. As the bones wear closer together other structures surrounding the bones can be affected. This is seen especially in the neck and back. Both nerves and blood vessels can be irritated or impinged as the vertebrae form osteophytes and place pressure on the vessels. With an adjustment and strengthening exercises the bones can be manipulated into their proper positions and the muscles can hold them strongly in place. This in turn relieves the pressure exerted on nerves, arteries and veins.

MassageTherapy

Some of the goals of a massage therapy treatment are to maintain or increase circulation to help remove metabolic waste products that may be collecting around the joint, maintaining the range of motion of the joint, reducing pain by reducing trigger points, muscle spasms and muscular hypertonicity (an increased tone of the muscle) and inducing relaxation to help relieve stress.

Although arthritis cannot be cured, especially in the case of rheumatoid arthritis, some of the uncomfortable side effects can be reduced. When pain and lim-

Acupuncture

Because of the inflammatory nature of rheumatoid arthritis and the bouts of inflammation that can occur in osteoarthritis, acupuncture is a very effective treatment for these conditions. The needling that occurs in a session is specific to the area and symptoms that you are experiencing. The point specific areas that are chosen help to stimulate the flow of endorphins which will either change the experience of pain or will trigger the release of other chemicals or hormones which influence the body's own internal regulation system. The improved energy and chemical substance produced by acupuncture results in stimulating the body's natural healing abilities which can be seen if reduced inflammation and relief of pain.

ited range of motion occur there is a greater risk of muscles either wasting because they aren't being used OR being overworked and developing trigger points because they are compensating for the other, weaker side.

Massage also has this wonderful way of relaxing the body and in turn helping to relieve pain. If you could for even an hour minimize the psychological effects that this condition can have wouldn't it be worth it to you?

NaturalSupplementstoHelpKeepJointsHealthy

Whether you are a healthy, and active 25 year old or a healthy and active 60 year old your joints are susceptible to both 'wear and tear' and the process of aging. Osteoarthritis (OA) is the degeneration of the cartilage that covers the ends of your bones and helps to act as a shock absorber. Within the make up of the of the collagen fibers of cartilage is a substance called chondroitin sulphate. The purpose of this substance is to supply support for collagen fibers and provide the cartilage with its resiliency to mechanical forces. An excess of force placed on the joints (ie. Running, standing for long periods of time, etc.) can interfere with pro-

duction of chondroitin which leads to a degeneration of the joint surfaces. The end result is what one experiences in pain, limited range of motion and stiffness.

Both glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate are natural supplements that are available over the counter and can help not only to prevent the loss of but to rebuild the cartilage that has been destroyed from OA. They help to manufacture the essential components of collagen and therefore keep the tissue strong and healthy. Talk to your health practitioner to discuss the dosage and whether these supplements are right for you!