



# JOINT DISEASE

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## ARTHRITIS

### ARTHRITIS FACTS

- 24.3 women with disease
- 17.1 men with disease
- Second only to heart disease as cause of work disability
- \$128 billion annual cost to U.S. economy
- Nearly 300,000 children have arthritis
- Most causes of arthritis are unknown
- There is no cure for arthritis
- Climate itself is neither the cause, nor the cure
- There is no evidence that specific foods prevent or cause arthritis

### COMMON MEDICATIONS

- **Analgesics** - Tylenol
- **Counterirritants** - Menthol creams or ointments
- **NSAID** - Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Naproxen
- **Biologics** - Enbrel
- **Corticosteroids** - Prednisone
- **DMARD** - Trexall

Arthritis is a type of disease that primarily causes damage to the joints of the body. A joint is an area of the body where two different bones meet. A joint functions to move the body parts connected by its bone. Arthritis literally means inflammation of one or more joints.

There are over 100 types of arthritis and each have a different cause. The common feature of all types of arthritis is pain. The two most common types are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a form of arthritis that occurs after damage to, infection of, or aging of a joint. This is a degenerative form of joint disease. Wear and tear damage to cartilage can result in bone grinding directly on the bone, which causes pain and re-

stricted movement. This wear and tear can occur over many years, or it can be accelerated by a joint injury or infection.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic inflammatory disorder that most typically affects the small joints in your hands and feet that is an autoimmune form of arthritis. It occurs when the body's immune system attacks itself. RA affects the lining of your joints, causing a painful swelling that can eventually result in bone wearing away and joint deformity.

Other forms of arthritis that can occur in older adults include:

- Gout
- Inflammatory spine arthritis
- Polymyalgia rheumatica and giant cell arteritis

- Systemic lupus erythematosus
- Infectious arthritis
- Fibromyalgia

For most types of arthritis, there is no cure. Pain relieving medications are usually the anchor of arthritis pain relief. Other treatment options include exercise, hot/cold treatments, use of joint protection, and surgery. Local steroid injections can be used for a specific, painful joint. Acupuncture provides many arthritis pain sufferers with an alternative or an addition to modern arthritis medication.

The goal is to treat all aspects of arthritis pain, increase joint movement and strength, and methods to help in learning to control pain.



Dealing with pain can be the hardest part of having arthritis, but you can learn to manage it and its impact on your life. Research has shown that people with a positive, proactive attitude are likely to experience less pain and limitations with ar-

## CONTROLLING PAIN

thritis than those who are more negative.

Mayo Clinic advises that adopting a healthy lifestyle will help with effectively using medical options. These changes in lifestyle include: reducing stress, taking time to relax, understanding your

pain, knowing when to rest, and using assistive devices.

Using these strategies under the direction of your doctor, can help reduce arthritis pain, possibly slow disease progression and overcome obstacles that arthritis pain may cause.