

ARTHRITIS



Arthritis
osteoarthritis
rheumatoid arthritis
gout Arthritis
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osteoarthritis



what is 

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is inflammation of the joints. It can be mild or severe, affecting one or more joints. It causes pain, swelling, warmth or stiffness in the affected joint.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ARTHRITIS?

Yes, there are many different types.
The 3 most common ones are:



osteoarthritis



rheumatoid arthritis



gout

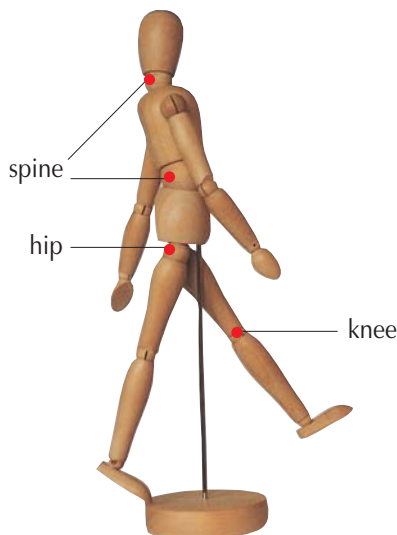


Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis. It is caused by wear and tear due to excessive use over the years or to old injuries in the affected joints. It commonly affects people over 60 years of age.

Which joints are affected?

Osteoarthritis mostly affects the large weight-bearing joints like the knees, hips and spine, causing pain and stiffness which is worst at the end of the day. The affected person may have difficulty in walking, climbing stairs, squatting or kneeling.



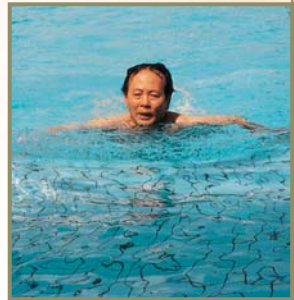
What is the treatment?

1. Weight Control

If you are overweight, losing some weight will reduce the strain on your hips and knees.

2. Physiotherapy and Exercise

Working with your physiotherapist is important for maintaining strength in the muscles around the joints and reducing stiffness in the affected joints. You should also exercise regularly to keep fit. Choose exercises (e.g. swimming) which do not strain your joints.



3. Heat Treatment and Medication

Warm baths and heating pads are soothing to painful joints. Sometimes, your physiotherapist may use a form of electrical treatment to help relieve your pain and stiffness. Your doctor may also prescribe some medicines for the pain.

4. Walking Aids

Good footwear and a walking stick can help you move around more comfortably.

5. Surgery

If you have severe osteoarthritis, you may need surgery to repair or replace the affected joint.

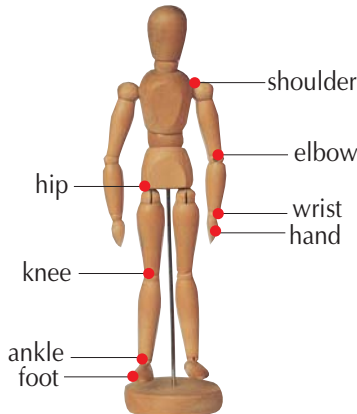


Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is due to an abnormal reaction of the body's immune system to the joints. It can also attack other parts of the body like the muscles, lungs, skin, blood vessels, nerves and eyes. It is most commonly seen in people between the ages of 40 and 60, especially in women.

Which joints are affected?

Rheumatoid arthritis often affects the small joints, especially of the wrists, hands and feet. It causes pain, stiffness and swelling which is worst in the morning. Later, other joints like the shoulders, elbows, hips, knees and ankles may also be involved. The affected person may find difficulty in gripping eating utensils, turning taps, dressing or writing.



What is the treatment?

1. Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy

Occupational therapy and physiotherapy help to improve your ability to function independently. Your occupational therapist can teach you how to use specially designed tools like large-handled spoons to carry out your daily activities.

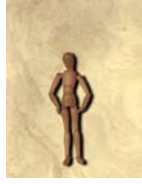
2. Heat/Cold Treatment and Medication

For stiff joints, warm water or a heating pad can help. With a hot, painful joint, cold packs or water may be better. Treatment for rheumatoid arthritis involves taking medicines which reduce the pain and swelling of the joints. Other medicines to slow down the progress of the disease may be added later.



3. Surgery

In the later stages, surgery may be needed to repair and replace badly damaged joints.

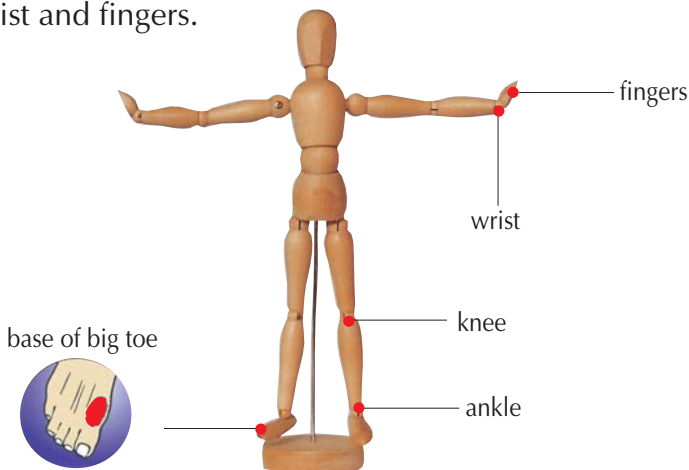


G o u t

Gout is a type of arthritis caused by uric acid. Uric acid is a waste product formed from the breakdown of certain proteins (called purines). It is normally removed from the body by the kidneys. In gout, uric acid builds up and forms crystals which are deposited inside the joints. Gout is more common in men, especially between the ages of 30 and 60.

Which joints are affected?

The base of the big toe is usually affected. The big toe becomes red, hot, swollen and very painful. The pain may last for days to weeks if not treated. Attacks may recur at intervals of weeks or months. Gout can also affect other joints like the ankle, knee, wrist and fingers.



What is the treatment?

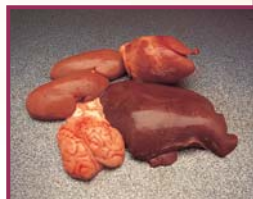
Gout is a curable disease, but if left untreated, it can cause kidney stones, which may lead to kidney damage.

1. Rest, Heat/Cold Treatment and Medication

During an attack of gout, bed rest is important. A hot compress or ice pack to the affected joint can relieve the pain. Your doctor will prescribe medicines to reduce the pain and inflammation. Other drugs can also be given to reduce the uric acid level in the body.

2. Diet

Avoid eating food high in purines, especially organ meats (see chart). Drink plenty of water and avoid taking alcohol.



Avoid these

Avoid eating high-purine food

- organ meats like liver, kidney, brain
- small fish (like ikan bilis, sardines) and fish roe
- meat extracts, yeast extracts (like Marmite) and stock cubes
- seafood like crab, cockles, prawns, scallops

Eat less of moderate-purine food

- asparagus, cauliflower, mushrooms and spinach
- peanuts, dhal, beans and peas
- chiku and custard apple
- wholegrain breads and cereal
- soyabean products like beancurd

Coping with ARTHRITIS



See a doctor early if you think you have arthritis. By simply 'putting up' with the joint pains, your condition may get worse and you could increase your risk of developing complications.



Take the medicines prescribed for you by your doctor. Do not change the dosage or stop the medicines on your own. Let your doctor know if you experience any side effects.



Do not try to treat arthritis with your own home remedies. Beware of unproven treatments offered by unqualified persons. These may do you more harm than good.



If you have been referred by your doctor to a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist, attend the therapy sessions regularly. Follow the advice of your therapist.

Family Members Can Help



Learn more about arthritis. Find out more from the doctor, nurse and therapist about the treatment (including recommendations for diet, exercise and medication).



Encourage regular exercise and proper diet, especially if the patient is overweight or has gout.



Make the home environment safe for the patient. If necessary, install handrails in the bathroom and provide non-slip surfaces on the floor.

Live WELL

Stay positive and active. Most types of arthritis only cause occasional problems. With proper management, you should be able to lead a satisfying and independent life.

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