

arthritis

metro

pharmacy



Healthy Living Makes a Difference

Healthy lifestyle habits are important for preventing and managing many health conditions. Arthritis is no exception. There are changes you can make to your diet and lifestyle to help manage pain and swelling. The first step is to understand what kind of arthritis you have. More than 100 different conditions can be classified as arthritis, with the two most common being Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

OSTEOARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common type of arthritis, affecting one in 10 Canadians. Although it can occur at any age, it usually affects people in their 40s and 50s and becomes more common as people age. OA affects men and women equally.

The main cause of OA is the breakdown of cartilage. Cartilage is a tough but flexible elastic material that covers the ends of the bones in your joints. It acts as a shock absorber when weight is put on the joint and allows bones to glide across each other with little friction. OA occurs when there is loss of cartilage, which eventually causes the bone underneath to thicken. The most common places where this occurs are in the joint at the base of the thumb, the end joints or the middle joints of the fingers, the hips, the

knees and the joint in the base of the big toe.

With OA, the affected joints tend to be stiff in the morning for about 15 to 20 minutes. This can get worse as the day progresses. The joints may become inflamed, causing swelling and pain. Rest brings relief, which leads to the joints being used less often and causes the surrounding muscle to weaken.

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) affects about one in 100 Canadians. Although it can occur at any age, it usually appears between the ages of 25 and 40. RA affects women three times more often than men.

RA is both a type of inflammatory arthritis and an autoimmune disease. In an autoimmune disease, the immune system mistakenly attacks the body. In RA, the

joints are the target of the immune system attack, causing swelling and pain in the joints that result in an inflammatory arthritis. RA usually begins slowly, starting in a few joints and then spreading over a few weeks to a few months to involve other joints. It rarely begins overnight. As time goes on, RA involves more and more joints on both sides of the body.

The symptoms of RA vary from person to person. Some people have only a few joints involved or experience mild inflammation, while others have many joints involved or experience severe inflammation. The symptoms of RA also vary over time. Joints may feel fine sometimes, but may become stiffer, more sore and swollen at other times. This is referred to as a "flare".

IS THERE A CURE FOR ARTHRITIS? There is no cure for RA or OA. However, with early detection and the right treatment, they can be controlled to prevent severe damage to your joints. Enjoying an active lifestyle despite arthritis is possible with medication, surgery (in some cases), lifestyle modifications and exercise.

Tips for Exercising with Arthritis

It is a common misconception that people with arthritis should not exercise. The exact opposite is true: people with arthritis should exercise to decrease pain, increase flexibility and improve overall fitness. Keep these tips in mind before starting an exercise regime:

- Check with your doctor and/or physiotherapist before starting a program. They can help you decide what type of exercise is best for you based on what type of arthritis you have, which joints are affected and what you like to do.
- Exercise on a regular basis. If you go several days without exercising, you may need to start again at a lower level.
- Try to do range of motion exercises daily. For some, doing these in the evenings reduces morning stiffness.
- Before exercising, massage the stiff or sore areas or apply heat and/or cold treatments. Heat relaxes your joints and muscles and helps relieve pain. Cold also reduces pain for some people.
- Don't forget to warm up before exercising and cool down after exercising.
- Cut down on exercise during flare-ups.



A Healthy Diet for Arthritis

Healthy eating habits are important for everyone. For people suffering from arthritis, there are specific dietary considerations to keep in mind.

- 1. Consume a well-balanced diet:** Eating a nutritious diet is vital and following Canada's Food Guide can help ensure you're getting the nutrients you need and the right amount of servings. Sometimes people with arthritis find it difficult to maintain a nutritious diet. This may be because of difficulty in preparing meals when joints are stiff or an inability to tolerate certain foods due to medication that irritates the stomach lining. If you're not able to follow Canada's Food Guide, talk to our pharmacist about supplementation and other options to ensure you are getting the nutrients you need.
- 2. Maintain a healthy weight:** Excess weight can speed up the breakdown of cartilage and worsen joint inflammation because of the extra strain on joints that are already affected. For those who are overweight, even a small loss in weight can make a big difference. Speak to our pharmacist for tips on an approach to healthy weight loss.



- 3. Omega 3 fatty acids:** Found in nuts and seeds and cold water fish like salmon or trout these are likely to be beneficial if you have an inflammatory type of arthritis (i.e. RA).
- 4. Antioxidants (Vitamins E and C, selenium and beta carotene):** These help protect joints and reduce inflammation by neutralizing some of the body's chemicals that cause inflammation, and they may even help prevent arthritis. Recent research has shown that people who eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, particularly those containing Vitamin C, may have a lower risk of developing inflammatory types of arthritis.
- 5. Calcium and Vitamin D:** Calcium is important in maintaining healthy bones; people with arthritis are at risk of developing osteoporosis. Vitamin D is important in helping absorb calcium, and new evidence shows that people with low Vitamin D levels may experience faster progression of both OA and RA. Our pharmacist can help you determine how much calcium and Vitamin D you need and whether you are getting enough in your diet.
- 6. Iron:** For a variety of reasons, many people with arthritis can be anemic. Make sure you get an annual check-up and discuss your iron levels with your physician.

Arthritis Alert

1. People with arthritis should exercise. T F
2. Citrus fruits cause inflammation. T F
3. If you have arthritis, it's either Rheumatoid Arthritis or Osteoarthritis. T F
4. Arthritis can affect people of all ages. T F
5. Dairy products make arthritis worse. T F
6. Fasting improves RA. T F
7. Changes in weather can affect your pain. T F

score

6-7 Answers Correct:
Congratulations! You are Arthritis Alert.

3-5 Answers Correct:
Continue to be aware of how your lifestyle can affect arthritis.

0-3 Answers Correct:
Consider speaking with our pharmacist to learn more about arthritis.

4. True. Many older people have arthritis but it can affect individuals of any age, even children.
5. False. Studies have shown that those with RA who did not consume dairy fared no better than those who did. Dairy products also appear to help prevent gout.
6. False. Fasting has been shown to help for a short period of time (less than 10 days); however, this undermines the immune system. A better way to get relief is to eat a healthy diet (as outlined in Canada's Food Guide) and lose any excess weight.
7. True. Researchers don't fully understand why, but changes in temperature or barometric pressure can trigger joint pain. One study has shown that changes in barometric pressure can affect the level of stress on the joints.

1. True. Exercise offers many benefits for those with arthritis; it helps to relieve pain, increase flexibility and improve overall health. Follow the advice of a physician or physiotherapist before starting a new exercise regime.
2. False. The opposite is true, food rich in Vitamin C helps prevent inflammation and is also critical in the formation of cartilage.
3. False. Although Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoarthritis are the two major types, there are more than 100 different kinds, including gout, lupus, fibromyalgia, etc. There are also associated conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome, osteoporosis and chronic back pain.

References

<http://www.arthritis.ca/>
<http://www.arthritisday.org/>
<http://www.arthritis.org>

→ My chart:

I
exercise
for _____ minutes
on _____ days
of the week

I
consume
_____ mg of
Calcium per
day

I
consume
_____ IU of
Vitamin D per
day

🎯 My targets:

(to be completed
by your health care
professional)

MY EXERCISE GOAL IS _____ MINUTES ON _____ DAYS OF THE WEEK

MY DAILY VITAMIN D INTAKE GOAL IS _____ MY DAILY CALCIUM INTAKE GOAL IS _____

ON A SCALE OF 1-10, WHERE 10 IS THE WORST PAIN I HAVE EVER FELT:

MY CURRENT PAIN LEVEL IS _____ MY TARGET LEVEL IS _____

Steps to Living Better with Arthritis

- Protect your joints by avoiding the application of excess stress. Rely on larger, stronger joints to lift and carry heavier loads and consider using assistive devices to make tasks at home and work easier. These can be used in the kitchen (rubber jar openers, reachers), bedroom (zipper pulls, buttoning aids), bathroom (tub bars, handrails) and other areas.
- Stay close to your recommended weight, as this will help reduce damaging pressure on hips and knees. For every pound of weight you lose, you lessen the pressure your body exerts on each knee by four pounds.
- Exercise helps to reduce pain, increases range of movement, reduces fatigue and makes you feel better overall. People with arthritis should include flexibility exercises to increase range of motion, aerobic exercises to improve endurance and decrease fatigue, and strengthening exercises to improve muscle fitness. Your doctor, physiotherapist or other health care professional should be consulted beforehand.
- Increase your intake of food containing Vitamin C. This will help slow the progression of OA and reduce inflammation. The recommended daily intake for men over 19 is 90mg per day, and for women over 19 it is 75mg per day.
- Protect yourself from the sun – wear sunglasses, a hat and sunscreen. Some forms of arthritis, as well as certain medications, can leave you more vulnerable to the sun's harmful rays.
- Increase your intake of calcium. A diet rich in this important mineral can help decrease your risk of osteoporosis. In addition, inflammatory arthritis conditions accelerate bone loss, so maintaining the optimum calcium intake is critical. For men between the ages of 19 and 70, the recommendation is 1000mg per day. Women aged 19 to 50 should also consume 1000mg per day. For women over 50 and men over 70, the recommendation is 1200mg per day.
- Take your medication exactly as prescribed by your doctor. If you're tempted to stop because you feel it's not working or you believe it's causing side effects, call your doctor first or talk to our pharmacist.
- Wear comfortable shoes. A well-padded, well-fitting shoe with plenty of room for your toes can make a world of difference in the way your feet (and the rest of you) feel.
- Take a warm bath before bed. It can relieve muscle tension, ease aching joints and help you get a good night's sleep.
- Find a certified massage therapist. The benefits vary from person to person but may include decreased pain and stiffness associated with arthritis, increased circulation, energy and flexibility, and an improvement in the body's sleep and immune functions. Massage can also decrease stress and depression.

My Arthritis Action Plan

I CAN IMPROVE MY ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT BY:

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I WILL FOLLOW UP WITH MY PHARMACIST ON:

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