

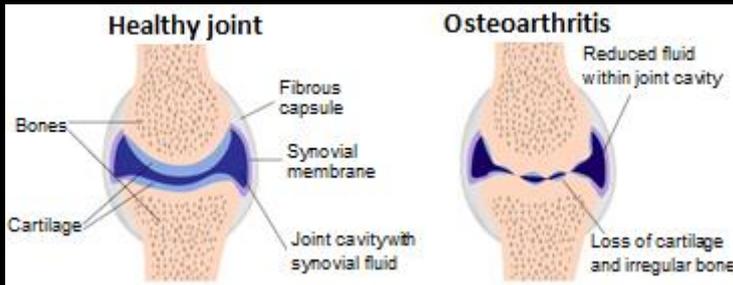
Osteoarthritis (OA)



Learning is Living



Arthritis refers to “joint inflammation”, which implies pain, redness and swelling of the affected joint. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis. OA is a chronic disease that causes progressive loss of joint cartilage (car-tee-lege). It often involves weight bearing joints such as hip, knee and ankles.



CAUSES/TRIGGERS:

- **Primary Osteoarthritis:** No obvious cause. Affects many joints (finger, base of the thumb, toes, spine) at the same time
- **Secondary Osteoarthritis:** Due other diseases or conditions e.g. obesity, repeated joint trauma, joint surgery, joint abnormalities at birth and hormonal disturbances

Risk Factors:

- Overweight / obese
- Joint injury
- Smoking
- Aging
- Family history

Symptoms:

Variable but often include:

- Joint pain, stiffness, swelling and redness; worsens with repetitive use of the affected joints, and relieved by rest
- Morning stiffness, usually of less than 20-30 minutes
- OA can affect the spine and cause neck (cervical) or low back (lumbar) pain
- Bone spurs, called osteophytes (os-tee-oh-fights) form along the bones of the spine, knee, heel and may cause severe pain by pinching the nerves around the affected area
- OA leads to the formation of hard, bony enlargements of the small joints of the fingers.



Treatment:

Goal is to minimize pain and improve quality of life.

Some patients may have minimal or no pain and may benefit from lifestyle changes, such as; rest, exercise, weight loss, physiotherapy and use of mechanical or non-mechanical protective devices.

Individuals requiring medication treatment

For mild to moderate pain	For persistent pain in severe arthritis
<p>Oral medications: including NSAIDs (e.g. ibuprofen, naproxen and celecoxib) and non-NSAIDs analgesics such as acetaminophen (Tylenol)</p>	<p>Injections into the affected joints e.g. cortisone or viscosupplements (synvisc, hyalgan, orthovisc)</p>
<p>Pain relieving creams: such as zostrix, aspercreme</p>	

Living with Osteoarthritis:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Balanced diet / exercise regularly
- Exercise regularly
- Avoid repeated motions of the joint, especially frequent bending
- Use heat and cold to manage pain
- Adjust furniture, such as raising a chair or toilet seat
- Wear appropriate equipment to minimize injury during sport and work where applicable

Outcome:

- Treatment can help minimize impact on everyday life
- Early recognition and adjustment lifestyle modification could help improve quality of life

For more information on osteoarthritis and other diseases: visit at www.educateyourhealth.com