

# Arthritis



Arthritis means inflammation of the joints. It causes pain and usually also limits movement of the joints that are affected. There are many kinds of arthritis. A type called osteoarthritis (also called degenerative joint disease) is the most common.

## What Causes Osteoarthritis?

The exact cause isn't known. A person may be at increased risk of osteoarthritis because it runs in the family. Osteoarthritis seems to be related to the wear and tear put on joints over the years in most people. But wear and tear alone don't cause osteoarthritis.

## What Happens When a Joint is Affected?

Normally, a smooth layer of cartilage acts as a pad between the bones of a joint. Cartilage helps the joint move easily and comfortably. In some people, the cartilage thins as the joints are used. This is the start of osteoarthritis. Over time, the cartilage wears away and the bones may rub against one another.

Bones may even start to grow too thick on the ends where they meet to make a joint, and bits of cartilage and bone may loosen and get in the way of movement. This can cause pain, joint swelling, and stiffness.

## Who Gets Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is more common in older people because they have been using their joints longer. Using the joints to do the same task over and over or simply using them over time can make osteoarthritis worse.

## Is There a Treatment?

No cure for osteoarthritis has been found. But the right plan can help you stay active, protect your joints from damage, limit injury, and control pain. Your doctor will help you create the right plan for you.

"Adding Years to life,  
and life to years".

## What lifestyle changes can I make?

- Lose weight if you are overweight
- Exercise regularly for short periods
- Go to a physical therapist if you can
- Use canes and other special devices designed to protect your joints
- Avoid lifting heavy objects
- Avoid overusing your joints
- Don't pull on objects to move them – push them instead
- Take your medicine the way your doctor suggests
  - Use heat and/or cold to reduce pain or stiffness

It is important to stay as active as possible. When joints hurt, people tend to not use them and the muscles get weak. This can cause contractures (stiff muscles) and can make it harder to get around. This causes more pain and the cycle begins again. Ask your doctor to discuss pain control with you so that you can stay active and avoid this problem.

## How Our Home Care Team Can Help

We provide seniors a range of personal care services to promote health and independence and to make it possible for the elderly to age where they want to age – at home.

Our services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – including weekends and holidays. With our personalized care plans, our clients choose the amount of time and type of care they prefer.

### Private Duty Services

*Our services include but are not limited to:*

- Supervise overall care on a regular basis
- Provide assistance with activities of daily living
- Assist with personal care
- Assist with exercise and mobility
- Medication reminders
- Record keeping
- Meal preparation
- Light housekeeping
- Laundry
- Grocery shopping and errands
- Escort to appointments
- Companionship / Conversation
- Respite care
- Assistance for those with confusion, disorientation or mental health issues
- And many more!