

The Wellness Express



Jump on the train to good health

Issue 1, June 2010

Arthritis: A Real Pain in the Joint

Presented by:

Arthritis, in its most literal sense, means joint inflammation. Although wear and tear may be the most common cause of inflammation and degeneration of the joints, arthritis is also a common cause, and it comes in many forms. In fact, arthritis refers to a group of more than 100 rheumatic diseases and other conditions that cause joint swelling and pain.

Chiropractors are musculoskeletal specialists. Whenever your joints begin to hurt, it's a good idea to make an appointment to see your chiropractor. After investigating your medical history, conducting several orthopedic tests and observing what movements are painful, your chiropractor will diagnose the problem and suggest a proper treatment plan.

Some cases of arthritis are helped by chiropractic adjustments, and others are not. If you experience redness, swelling and pain around a joint that hasn't been physically strained, or the joint pain is also associated with fever or skin rash, you should also check with your medical doctor. These symptoms may indicate a type of arthritis that may require medication.

If left untreated, certain cases of arthritis can result in life-threatening complications.

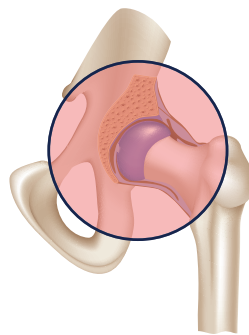
Presented by:

Common Types of Arthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA)

Also known as degenerative joint disease, this form of arthritis is the most common, and results from excessive wear and tear of the joints. Osteoarthritis usually affects the large weight-bearing joints of your body, such as the knees, hips and spine. Physical trauma, obesity and repetitive use can increase your risk for this type of arthritis. The onset of osteoarthritis is usually gradual, and the risk increases as you age. Early signs of osteoarthritis include joint stiffness, as well as increased pain when you are active and decreased pain when you rest.

Proper alignment and movement in the joints of the body can help prevent the damage caused by abnormal wear and tear. Therefore, it is important to have your joints checked regularly for misalignment.



Exercise of the Week

Seated Glute Stretch

Difficulty: Easy

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Start: Seated, with legs out in front of you, knees straight.

Exercise: Take one leg, and cross ankle over opposite knee. Then, pull knee toward opposite shoulder. Hold for 30-60 seconds, then return to start position. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

This is also one of the more common forms of arthritis. However, RA has several different features that distinguish it from osteoarthritis. It's an autoimmune disease, usually detectable by the presence of a blood-borne substance called rheumatoid factor. Although it involves joint swelling, pain and stiffness similar to osteoarthritis, RA usually affects the smaller joints of the hands and feet. Other symptoms like fatigue, loss of appetite and low grade fever may accompany RA joint pain.

Most patients with this condition are between 30 and 50 years old. Degenerative changes to the joint are usually quite rapid, and patients usually experience greater disability than those with osteoarthritis. Patients who have RA are not good candidates for upper cervical adjustments. This is because certain ligaments in the neck tend to deteriorate along with the joints, making the area very unstable.

Psoriatic Arthritis (PA)

Psoriatic arthritis is another chronic type of this disease similar to rheumatoid arthritis. However, psoriatic arthritis differs in a number of areas: PA is often associated with a skin condition called psoriasis; PA is more commonly associated with the spine or the larger joints of the lower body; and PA typically affects one side of the body, not both.

There may be progressive damage to the joints of PA patients. NSAID medications are often recommended for sufferers when the symptoms are early and mild.

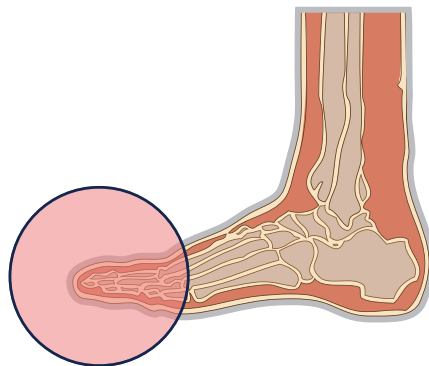
Gout

Gout is a painful type of arthritis that causes sudden, severe attacks of pain, redness, and swelling in the joints, especially the big toe. The pain and swelling associated with gout are caused by uric acid crystals that escape out of the blood and are deposited in the joint. It typically affects one joint. As well as the big toe, other susceptible areas to gout are the knee, ankle, foot, hand, wrist and elbow.

Treatment of gout usually includes medications that limit the production of uric acid in the system, or NSAID drugs to decrease the pain and inflammation. Dietary modifications are recommended, such as avoiding red wine and red meat.



Arthritis of any kind can be a real pain in the joint. The best way of treating arthritis is to avoid developing it. Regular chiropractic care is the best way to keep your joints healthy.



Quote of the Week

"The groundwork of all happiness is health."
- Leigh Hunt



References and Sources:

American Chiropractic Association: <http://www.acatoday.org/>

The Arthritis Society: <http://www.arthritis.ca/>



This newsletter is written and designed by **Mediadoc™** exclusively for its chiropractic clients.

Writer/Editor: David Coyne

Writer: Dr. Christian Guenette, DC

Design: Elena Zhukova

Photos: Fred Goldstein