



Joint Health

For An **Active Lifestyle**

Health & Lifestyle Choices
Why Do I Hurt?
Joint Health Options

Inside
Arthritis Tips
and Information

The purpose of this booklet is to offer information on joint health. Our belief is that the more you know about your body, arthritis, your joints and joint pain, the better equipped you will be to manage your joint health.

Joint Health for an Active Lifestyle is provided as information only and is not intended to diagnose any condition, provide medical advice or in lieu of the specialized care of your doctor. The contributors to this booklet, while respected experts in their fields of study, make no endorsement of any product or form of treatment.

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Joint Health *for an Active Lifestyle*

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WHY DO I HURT?

One of the most difficult things in dealing with arthritis or a related condition is living with the pain. ***Joint Health For An Active Lifestyle*** wants to help you learn to manage pain and its impact to help you feel better. Understanding what type of arthritis or condition you have will help determine your options.

First things first ...let's understand some concepts about pain.

The Purpose of Pain

Pain is a bad or unpleasant physical feeling. Your whole perspective on life changes when pain is present. When you are injured, nerves release chemical signals to your brain, recognized as pain. Pain is an alarm system telling you something is wrong. Often pain tells you **“DO SOMETHING”**. Think about when you



were a child and touched a hot stove. Pain signaled to your brain, **“GET YOUR HAND OFF THAT STOVE!!”** Pain like this protects you.

On the other hand, pain that lasts a long time, like with arthritis, is different. Indeed, it tells you something is wrong, but it is often not easy to relieve. To enhance your well-being, managing this type of pain is essential.

ARTHRITIS

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC), Arthritis is the leading cause of work disability. With the aging of the U.S. population, the prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis is expected to increase in the coming decades. By the year 2030, an estimated 67 million (25% of the projected total adult population) adults aged 18 years and older will have doctor-diagnosed arthritis, compared with the 42.7 million adults in 2002. Two-thirds of those with arthritis will be women. The impact of arthritis on individuals is significant. Almost 38% (16 million) of the 42.7 million adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis report limitations in their usual activities due to

their arthritis. (1) In addition to activity limitations, 31% (8.2 million) of working age adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis report being limited in work activities due to arthritis. (1) Data Source: 2002 National Health Interview Survey, www.fda.gov

What are some of the symptoms of arthritis? Pain, loss of movement and pain with movement in and around joints are the most common complaints for this debilitating disorder. There are more than 100 diseases in the group known as arthritis—inflammation of a joint. What causes arthritis? The human skeleton consists of 206 bones. We are actually born with more bones (about 300), but many fuse together as we grow up. These bones support your body and allow you to move. Along with muscles and joints, bones are responsible for you being able to move. You also need joints which provide flexible connections between these bones. Some, such as those in your knees, work like door hinges, enabling you to move back and forth. Still other joints, like the shoulder, enable you to move your arms 360 degrees. In healthy individuals, spacing, cartilage pads, joint capsules and discs between the bones keep them from grinding together and wearing down at the joint site. When this spacing deteriorates, the

joints become inflamed and are bone to bone in many cases causing an increase in the incidence of pain. Males and females, young and old can be affected, although medical statistics reveal that the typical arthritis sufferer is overweight, between 65 and 74, and female. Heredity can also play a role. Be sure and thank mom and dad for that! Another cause for arthritis is over use of a joint such as in tennis players, dancers, carpenters swinging a hammer, office workers and many other individuals who repetitively strain joints. Injuries sustained from motor vehicle accidents, sports and the like increase the odds of developing arthritis.

Sometimes, it may be difficult to determine whether or not you have arthritis. You should determine if the pain, stiffness and/or swelling of your knees, elbows, hips or other joints you experience is serious enough to warrant medical attention. For example if you develop mild pain following vigorous exercise, that could be a temporary condition relieved by relaxation and a mild, over-the-counter pain reliever. On the other hand, if your joints hurt for more than 7 days, you should see a doctor. Knowing what type of arthritis or other injury or disease you may have is an important step in treating your symptoms.

Arthritis ... Osteoarthritis ... they are all the same, right? Let's explore that a bit.

OSTEOARTHRITIS is a chronic disease of the joints, resulting from a cartilage breakdown. This condition is often called Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD). Symptoms can include pain, stiffness and inflammation of the affected joints. It is more common in older individuals; however, young people can be affected as well. Osteoarthritis is especially common in those who have cartilage or joint defects. Women are more commonly affected than are men. Pain occurs most often when joints have been over-used or kept motionless for long periods of time. This type of arthritis is most often related to the demands we have placed on our bodies. Mus-

cles around the joint can contract or weaken and feel stiff. The most common sites of osteoarthritis are the hips, knees, spine, neck, hands and feet. When the knees are af-



ected, the major symptom is pain with motion that disappears with rest. Treatment is geared towards controlling the pain. A physician will typically use X-rays and physical examinations to diagnose osteoarthritis.

JOINT HEALTH OPTIONS

Ok, we know a little about just a few of the conditions that affect joint health. What are your options?

With a disease or condition like arthritis, quality of life and usefulness become issues that are often extremely hard to address. Dependence on family, neighbors and the medical profession increases. Arthritis can not only be debilitating physically but emotionally, especially when your arthritis causes you to have difficulty getting out of bed in the morning, or you experience grinding pain and stiffness in the knees, hips or elbows, suffering even more progressive, disabling dilemmas. Let's not forget those stiff and swollen fingers that make even the simplest household chore next to impossible; or having to use a cane for support in private when you might be too proud to be seen using one in public. Un-

fortunately, this unwelcome condition affects many as we age, causing us to slow down and, in many instances, give up or extensively modify the activities we enjoy so much.

Your first step in managing arthritis is to get an early start. Do not ignore your symptoms. Some of the most dangerous words ever spoken in a doctor's office are "I thought it would go away." If you have had pain, swelling or stiffness in or around your joints that lasts more than 7 days, it's time to see your doctor. Don't just assume it's an expected consequence of aging. In addition to getting an accurate diagnosis from your physician, there are lots of things you can do in just about every stage of arthritis to help.

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Please note: The alternative therapies that follow are provided as information only and not all have been clinically proven in controlled clinical trials. The National Institute of Health is currently conducting clinical trials on many dietary supplements and alternative therapy treatments. Please consult the FDA (www.fda.gov), National Institute of Health (www.nih.gov) and other reputable websites for fur-

ther information. The publisher of this booklet and the contributing authors have included these therapies as information only and encourage readers to consult with a qualified health care practitioner prior to beginning any new supplement or therapy.

Certo

Pectin used for making jams and jellies, mixed with purple grape juice has shown promise for relief. The proportions are 8oz. of purple grape juice combined with 1-2 tablespoons of Certo. Diabetics should look for unsweetened grape juice.

Curry contains powerful antioxidants that may reduce pain and inflammation for arthritis sufferers.

Garlic appears to relieve some forms of arthritis pain. The sulfur contained in this product has been reported to benefit sufferers.

Grapes also contain boron and their skins contain a compound that blocks the inflammation that causes arthritis.

Milk good for you. You've probably heard this since you were a child. It is the calcium in milk that helps

keep our bones healthy as we age. It reduces your risk for acquiring osteoporosis. If you're not fond of milk, try yogurt, ice cream or cheese. If none of these works for you, choose calcium tablets from your local pharmacy.

Nuts, particularly almonds, hazelnuts and peanuts contain boron, a mineral that keeps bones strong and healthy, thus helping to prevent arthritis.

Omega-3 fatty acids

These fatty acids can help with joint health. Omega-3 can be found in supplement form or in fish such as salmon.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:

Not Your Only Options

Acetaminophen and **Ibuprofen** are most commonly used for the pain and inflammation of arthritis.

Glucosamine & Chondroitin Sulfate

A recent medical study found this supplement, made from the shells of crabs, lobsters and shrimp, to be

a significant benefit for patients with moderate to severe knee pain. Bear in mind that this supplement should be viewed as a long-term approach. Remember that you didn't develop your arthritis overnight, so give this supplement time to work (typically 12 to 18 months for maximum benefit).

Water

Yep, mom was right. That old adage of 8 glasses of water a day is a good idea. You probably didn't know, but some of your joints, like the discs in your spine, have no blood supply. So the way they stay healthy and thick is through proper nutrition and proper motion. Water and diet will help with nutrition.



EXERCISE

Yes, there's that word again.

Time to get moving.

Before beginning any exercise regimen, you should

check with your doctor to determine if you are healthy enough for the program you have in mind. This is extremely important if you are over 40, have heart disease, hypertension or have not exercised on a regular basis recently.

Stepping Out

Yes, step outside and walk around the block. This form of fitness is free, can be done almost anywhere and provides the weight bearing exercise needed to keep your bones in shape without the impact of running or jogging. Once you have successfully conquered this endeavor and feel you want to proceed, consider switching to jogging or running – again in moderation until you feel successful with your program.

Just remember that the stress of jogging and running can be a cause of arthritis, so moderation and consent from your physician is key. Can't get outdoors? Consider a treadmill in the privacy of your home. Remember, you won't accomplish much using that treadmill for drying your laundry! Step on there and get some exercise.



Biking

This activity puts minimal strain on your joints and can be done in the comfort of your home or outside on bike paths and roads. After several sessions, take the liberty of finding trails with small hills or increase the level of incline on your stationary bike. This form of exercise is not typically recommended for people with osteoarthritis of the knees and hips because of stress placed on those joints. Alternate activities to consider for such patients are the use of a stationary exercise bike or an elliptical training machine. Again, remember this equipment will only work if you actually USE it.

Water Is For More Than Drinking

Water is probably the most appropriate exercise for arthritis sufferers, since there is minimal pressure exerted on joints. In fact, water therapy is often one of the first things recommended following spine, knee or hip surgeries. With swimming, more than 2/3 of the muscles in your body are used, giving you a very good workout. Water aerobics are offered at many YMCA's and is ordinarily performed in warm water pools. Don't live near a YMCA? Try a whirlpool mat in the bathtub. Make due with whatever resources you have. Gentle range-of-motion and flexibility

exercises are incorporated and pain relief is often found to last for several days following this therapy.

Your Exercise Choice

The type of exercise you select is a personal decision. Find one that you feel comfortable with, for your type of arthritis. Start in moderation and do not proceed until you feel comfortable doing so. Remember, exercise should not hurt, but should benefit your condition. That old “No Pain, No Gain” motto definitely does not apply to arthritis. Listen to your body. Just getting out and getting moving is a great start. Inactivity, such as hours spent in front of the TV leads to slowing of the metabolism and even overeating. Maintaining a healthy weight, proper exercise technique, Chiropractic, Osteopathic and Massage therapies can help with proper motion.

HEALTH & LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Shed the Surplus

Yes, that little “four letter word”, DIET. But we are talking about more than just losing weight. Your “diet” is everything that goes in your mouth. If you do need to lose weight, your physician is a great place to start. Most people reading this will know

that while there is no magic bullet to losing weight, there are some standards that apply to almost everyone. Smaller portions, several smaller meals throughout the day compared to three large meals, increasing your water intake and increasing your activity level are



a few basics principals to remember. Make smart choices in your diet, regardless of whether or not you need to lose weight. Skip the fast food when you can. If you have no option but fast food, choose a salad. If the primary color of your diet is “steak brown,” you might want to add a little color to the plate. Fresh oranges, orange juice and many other fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants and offer more for your joints than that ribeye steak. Make snacking healthier easier. We are a culture of convenience. Those french fries and potato chips are easier to pass up if you already have celery or carrot sticks cut up and waiting in the fridge. Switch to

caffeine free sodas, coffee or tea. Caffeine is an appetite stimulant. Once you cut it out, you probably will never miss it.

Work Smarter, not Harder

If you use a computer at work or home, make sure your monitor is 18 to 24 inches away from your face with the top 1/3 of the monitor at eye level. This will ease eye and neck strain. Limit your sitting time. Sitting loads more forces into the discs of your spine than any other position. Standing all day is not good either. Get up and move around every 45 minutes or so. Stretch and loosen up. Our bodies weren't designed to sit in a cubicle 8 hours a day. Avoid over doing it with lifting by using things to make your job easier like carts, dollies and a helper.

De-Stress

Get a professional massage. It's not just a luxury and can be very beneficial. Soak in a nice warm bath. Moist heat in moderation can be great for pain and stiffness, but don't sleep on a heating pad. Try a warm compress or microwavable heat pack for 20 minutes, but then remove it for at least an hour. Ice therapy can be great for inflammation, swelling, pain and edema. Don't run out and waste money on ice

packs. You can make them yourself in a one-gallon freezer bag. Put in two parts water and one part rubbing alcohol and toss it in the freezer. Make sure you put a thin barrier such as a towel between your skin and the ice pack. This homemade ice pack will get cold enough to help, without freezing solid. You can wrap it around knees, elbows and other sore places. An even easier option is a bag of frozen peas. Just don't forget that barrier between you and the cold. Same rule as the heat, 20 minutes on and then skip an hour.

SUMMARY

Remember, you need not spend the remainder of your life shuffling from your bed to an easy chair and back again or passing each day in a rocking chair waiting, with apprehension, repetition the following day. Eat well, exercise to the extent you feel capable and talk with your physician about supplements you plan to take and the right joint health plan for you. It's your body.

Be an informed patient, guided by a physician you feel comfortable working with. Ask questions and participate in your joint health plan.

Stay Positive

Lastly, look at your outlook and to a higher power. Positive thinking, prayer and spiritual belief have all been shown in research to help people feel better physically. As you begin to feel better, find ways to help others feel better by volunteering and sharing your experiences.

14 Steps to a Healthier You

Act now

Reduce your weight

Talk to your doctor

Have a plan

Read about your condition

Ice those swollen joints

Turn off your television

Initiate an exercise program

Swim

Help your self, you're in control

Understand why you hurt

Remember to eat properly

Talk to your pharmacist about your meds

Slim down

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