

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

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What is Arthritis and how does it affect You

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Introduction

Arthritis is defined as inflammation of a joint, usually accompanied by pain, redness over a joint, swelling, and stiffness and decreased range of motion. As a joint disorder arthritis can affect anybody at any age.

There are many underlying causes of arthritis:

1) Inflammation due to Trauma

Joints have soft tissue holding them together and if this tissue becomes irritated due to an impact injury or trauma it will compromise the



mechanics of the joint. Over time arthritis will develop in the joint unless the mechanics are corrected early on. Chiropractic adjustments are great for correcting joint mechanics and may help reduce the risk of developing arthritis.

2) Ligament or Tendon Attachment Arthritis

This type of arthritis occurs most frequently in the heel or lower back. An injury or repetitive motion with abnormal mechanics over time may result in chronically shortened ligaments or tendons. Over time, these chronically shortened ligaments or tendons pull against their bony attachment site, keeping the bone constantly irritated. The bone, in response to the chronic irritation, creates a bone spur. Generally people are not aware that this type of arthritis is developing until the pain shows up. Good shoes and chiropractic are great preventatives for this type of arthritis!

3) Crystalline Deposit Arthritis

Generally occurring in the big toe, this type of arthritis is created when deposits of microscopic crystals build up. As the crystals develop they damage the joint causing its

Exercise of the Week

Seated Twist
Difficulty: Easy

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

Start: Seated on a chair.

Exercise: Keeping knees pointing straight ahead, reach around behind you, holding onto armrest or backrest of chair to maintain this twisted position. Relax lower back, breathing slowly and deeply. Hold for 30-60 seconds, and then return to starting position. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



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deterioration. (Gout is caused by monosodium urate monohydrate crystals; pseudogout or calcium pyrophosphate disease is caused by calcium pyrophosphate.) While this type of arthritis is heavily impacted by diet it is often helped with chiropractic for mobilizing the joints to assist in returning motion to the joint and reducing joint inflammation.

4) Joint Infection

Bacteria contaminate the fluid inside the joint and erode the joint cartilage and bone. These infections are most commonly located in the hip, shoulder and knee and can be treated with chiropractic care after the infection has been resolved to try to maximize both joint motion and function to try to reduce future degenerative change to the joint.

5) Cartilage Degeneration

Found in the knees, neck, lower back, hips and fingers, this type of arthritis develops when the cartilage of the joint breaks down due to abnormal wear and tear over time. Called osteoarthritis or degenerative arthritis, this type of arthritis can be managed well with chiropractic adjustments. However, it is better to treat abnormal mechanics with adjustments BEFORE the degeneration starts.

6) Muscle Inflammation

Muscle tissue becomes inflamed and irritated due to overuse or trauma and functions abnormally setting up the associated joints for abnormal wear and tear and degeneration over time.

Treatment

Treatment for arthritis is adapted to suit the age, build, pain levels and general health of the patient. Treatment plans also take into consideration whether your condition is acute or chronic and will look at how severe your arthritis is. Once pain care has been completed, supportive or maintenance care for the arthritic patient is a must to keep the arthritic joint as functional and healthy as possible. Ongoing supportive care may slow down or stop further degenerative changes of the joint and the pain and loss of function that can occur as a result of the additional joint degeneration.

An autoimmune arthritis known as **rheumatoid arthritis** generally affects the knees, feet and hands although one in four patients with rheumatoid arthritis have spinal involvement. Your chiropractor will evaluate very specifically for spinal involvement to assess the type of treatment that is indicated or contraindicated for this type of arthritis.

From a chiropractic viewpoint, the main goal of any arthritis treatment is to minimize symptoms in order to maintain a better quality of life.



Quote to Inspire

“Keep moving. If you do, you’ll keep arthritis at bay”

Donna Mills

TRIVIA QUESTION:

Which of the following are symptoms of arthritis?

- A) joint inflammation
- B) redness over a joint
- C) swelling and pain
- D) decreased range of motion

ANSWER:

A, B, C and D are all symptoms



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