



Osteoarthritis

The

Pulse

Osteoarthritis (OA), also called degenerative (breaking down) joint disease, is one of the most common types of arthritis, affecting more than 25 million people in the United States. The disease causes the cushioning

on the ends of joints, known as cartilage, to break down, allowing bones to rub against each other. This causes pain, swelling and loss of motion. This process most often affects the hands, knees, hips, feet, neck and back.

Many factors can cause OA. One may be simple "wear and tear" on the joint. People with joint injuries from exercise, repetitive activities or accidents have an increased risk of developing OA. Another cause may be obesity, resulting in OA of the knees. In some families, inherited factors play a role in a person's risk for developing arthritis.

Doctors can make a diagnosis of OA based on a physical exam and medical history. X-rays may be taken to see if, and how much, joint damage has already occurred and to confirm the diagnosis. Other tests may be done to rule out other possible causes of the patient's symptoms.

The most successful treatment program involves a

combination of medication, physical therapy, and lifestyle habits to reduce the painful inflammation from OA. As a last resort, surgery may be needed to either "clean-up" the joint or replace the joint if it is completely worn away.

Cream or gel pain relievers often are applied to the skin to reduce symptoms. Ice can also be used as a way to reduce the pain from OA. Pain relievers such as acetaminophen have been shown to be effective for mild to moderate pain. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, are often used to reduce pain and swelling. Newer pharmaceutical medications are being developed which have demonstrated significant improvement in people's arthritic pain. Injecting a joint with a corticosteroid may offer pain relief for four to six months. Another medication, called hyaluronic acid, can be injected into knee joints and often results in several months of reduced pain.

Successfully dealing with arthritis pain also requires self-management. It is important for patients to learn about the disease and to take part in their own care. Working with health care professionals allows a person to share in decision making and gain a sense of

control. With the right combination of strengthening and flexibility exercises, weight management, medication and occasionally surgery people with osteoarthritis can live a long and productive life.



By: James R. Clark, MD
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Charlottesville Medical Research is currently conducting two Q.A studies with Dr. James Clark as the Principal Investigator. Dr. Clark is the Medical Director of Medfit Wellness Center on Berkmar Drive, a 16,000 square foot facility that includes his private practice, a Fitness & Wellness Center and his Physical Therapy offices with 4 physical therapists on staff. Despite rising healthcare costs, each patient at Medfit Physical Therapy receives a full hour of one-on-one interaction with a physical therapist where a strong emphasis is placed on pain management.

What is Osteoarthritis

2,600 Dollars

is the average direct cost per year per person with OA

21 MILLION

Americans are affected by OA

86.2 BILLION DOLLARS

is the estimated annual cost to the US economy for arthritis related conditions

(Source: Arthritis Foundation)

Charlottesville Medical Research Current and Future Research Studies

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- Pediatric Meningitis Vaccine
- Osteoarthritis of the knee
- Osteoarthritis of any joint
- Migraine
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
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- Obesity with Diabetes



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