

Arthritis: A Life Altering Condition

The word arthritis is used to describe more than 100 different conditions that cause pain, stiffness, and swelling in the joints. There are two main types of arthritis: inflammatory and non-inflammatory. Each has features that set it apart from other types of joint pain.

There are many types of inflammatory arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis, gout, and arthritis caused by infections. The most common type of non-inflammatory arthritis is osteoarthritis.

Causes

Osteoarthritis can be caused by various factors, including wear and tear that occurs with time. As the body ages, joints become worn down from years of movement. Osteoarthritis is very common in older adults. Rheumatoid arthritis is caused by a breakdown in the body's immune system. It is not known why this occurs, but may have a genetic basis.

Symptoms

The start of inflammatory arthritis varies from person to person. For some people, the pain can be sudden and intense. For others, the pain is gradual. Symptoms of inflammatory arthritis include swelling, redness, warmth, tenderness, loss of motion or function of the joint, and joint damage. Osteoarthritis starts slowly, usually over many months or years. Symptoms may include minor swelling and changes in the joint cartilage, which can lead to joint damage, pain, and loss of function. The joints most affected are the knee, hip, and hand.

Treatment

Your doctor may prescribe medicines to help treat your arthritis. Over-the-counter medicines are often the first treatment choice for arthritic pain. Two main types of medicines are used: acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs). These medications reduce swelling and pain. Let your doctor know about any over-the-counter products you are taking in addition to what he or she has prescribed.

How to Prevent A Stroke



- **Eat a healthy diet.** Choosing healthful meal and snack options can help you avoid stroke and its complications. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eating foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber can help prevent high blood cholesterol. Limiting salt or sodium in your diet can also lower your blood pressure.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for stroke. To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate a number called the body mass index (BMI). If you know your weight and height, you can calculate your BMI at www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/index.html
- **Be active.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure. The Surgeon General recommends that adults should engage in at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week of physical activity.
- **Don't smoke.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for stroke. So, if you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quitting will lower your risk. Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit.
- **Limit alcohol use.** Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which causes high blood pressure.

Daily Activities as Exercise Can Help Your Heart

According to Jennifer Mieres, M.D., American Heart Association (AHA), "to get heart-healthy benefits, you need to get your heart rate up" there are dozens of activities you can do to help your heart. Whether it is a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all physical activity adds up. It's easy to follow these exercise tips at home, at work, and at play to increase the amount of physical activity in your life.

Tips to help you start a heart healthy exercise plan.

1. Aerobic exercises done 30 minutes a day are excellent for increasing your heart rate. Climbing the stairs, a brisk walk, orbital exercise machine or treadmill, anything to get your heart rate up.
2. Any moderate-intensity exercise like swimming, jogging, Pilates and yoga is good. Exercising your heart muscle means exercising your body. You don't need a gym, just a bit of motivation and a good pair of walking shoes.
3. If you "don't have time" then fit in shorter but more frequent periods of time, like 5-10 minutes several times a day throughout your day. Take the stairs, park your car farther away from the door, and definitely count in those house chores such as mowing the lawn, vacuuming, or a short brisk walk around the block at lunch or for a break.
4. If you already do a vigorous aerobic routine or are enrolled in an exercise class, then three days a week for 20 minutes a day is good.
5. For adults that are 65 and older or anyone with chronic conditions or limited mobility, you need the same amount of exercise as younger people – the activity can be less intense. Use good judgment and follow your doctor's advice. See tip #1 and plan to gradually increase activities.
6. Strength training is a great complement to aerobic training and helps to prevent age-related bone and muscle-mass losses. Keep in mind that strength training doesn't increase heart rate but does increase stamina. Use it to target areas where muscle-tone is needed.
7. With any plan, start strength training slowly and build up to heavier weights and repetitions, especially if you are new to weight training or out of shape.
8. Practice balance exercises to help prevent falls and injuries. Balance techniques are used frequently as exercises in yoga or more simple forms of balancing exercises such as walking heel-to-toe, standing on one foot, or standing up and sitting down without using your hands.
9. Stretching exercises done twice a week help keep flexibility, which is very important. Consider 10 minutes of stretching twice a week to improve your flexibility.



Facts About Hepatitis

What is hepatitis?

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. The liver is the largest gland in the body, located in the right, upper belly. The liver is a vital organ that produces many of the proteins of the body that are necessary for life.

Many illnesses and conditions can cause liver inflammation, such as virus and bacteria infections, drugs, alcohol, chemicals, and autoimmune diseases. When medical professionals speak of hepatitis, they are usually referring to liver inflammation caused by viruses. These specific hepatitis viruses have been labeled A, B, C, D, E, F (not confirmed), and G. (As our knowledge of new viruses grows, it is likely this alphabetical list will become more lengthy.)

While some viruses, such as mononucleosis and cytomegalovirus, can also cause liver inflammation, they do not primarily attack the liver.

What are the functions of the liver?

- The liver helps purify the blood by changing harmful chemicals into harmless substances. The source of these chemicals can be external, such as medications or alcohol, or internal, such as ammonia or bilirubin. Typically, these harmful substances are broken down into smaller substances that are excreted from the body into the urine or stool.
- The liver produces many important compounds, especially proteins, that are necessary for good health. It produces albumin, the building block protein of the body, as well as the proteins that help blood to clot properly. The liver stores many of the sugars, fats and vitamins until they are needed elsewhere in the body.
- The liver transforms smaller building block type substances into larger more complicated compounds needed elsewhere in the body. When the liver is inflamed, it does not perform these functions for the body as efficiently, which brings about the symptoms associated with hepatitis.