

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is a general term for a group of more than 100 medical conditions that, collectively, are the most common chronic health condition affecting Americans - nearly 46 million adults and 300,000 children. What is common among these 100+ conditions is that they all affect the musculoskeletal system - specifically the joints - where two or more bones meet. Arthritis-related joint problems include inflammation, stiffness, pain and damage to joint cartilage and surrounding structures. This damage can lead to joint weakness, instability and visible deformities that, depending on the location of the joint involvement, can interfere with the most basic daily tasks such as walking, climbing stairs, using a computer keyboard, cutting food or brushing teeth.

For many people with arthritis, joint involvement is not the extent of the problem. Many forms of arthritis can cause damage to virtually any organ or system, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, blood vessels and skin.

Importance of Managing Your Arthritis

There are no cures for arthritis, but easing the pain and slowing joint destruction are possible. As more is learned about arthritis, there is a growing understanding that the patient has an important role to play in the management of his or her arthritis.

Sources:
www.webmd.com
www.arthritis.org



Products to relieve pain and manage the symptoms of arthritis.

Heat and Cold Treatments

Using heat and cold treatments can reduce the pain and stiffness of arthritis.

Cold packs numb the sore area and reduce inflammation and swelling. They are especially good for joint pain caused by a flare.

- Cold pack (lower back/shoulder)
- Cold pack (knee/shoulder)
- Cold pack (ankle/elbow/knee)

Dry heat or moist heat relaxes your muscles and stimulates blood flow.

- Therabeads moist heat standard pack (shoulder/knee/back)
- Therabeads moist heat king size pack (shoulder/lower back)
- Therabeads moist heat neck/shoulder pack
- Therabeads half size pack (knee/ankle/elbow/hand)

Exercise/Fitness Equipment

Appropriate exercise can reduce pain, reduce stiffness and improve balance.

- exercise balls
- pedal exerciser
- pedal stepper exerciser
- Theraband resistive exercise bands
- therapy putty

Orthotics (Braces)

The use of orthotic devices, or braces, is one way to treat the most common form of arthritis - osteoarthritis. Braces are designed to stabilize a joint, reduce pain and inflammation and help the person wearing the brace build stronger muscles. Braces can be over-the-counter, pre-made elastic and neoprene braces or they can be custom-designed and fitted functional braces.

- ankle, knee and lower extremity braces
- shoulder, elbow, wrist and upper extremity braces
- back braces

Joint pain, weakness and instability can make the most basic daily tasks difficult to perform. Products are available to assist with dressing, personal hygiene and walking/mobility.

Dressing

Getting dressed may be easier with the use of these aids for daily living:

- sock/stocking aid
- shoe horn
- elastic shoe laces
- dressing stick
- button aid/zipper pull
- reacher

Personal Hygiene and Bathroom Safety

Bathing and maintaining personal hygiene can be made easier for you and those who assist with your care with these products:

- bath mat
- bath sponge
- grab bar
- hand-held shower
- commode
- bath transfer bench or chair
- raised toilet seat with arms
- toilet safety frame with arms

Walking/Mobility

For maintaining balance and preventing falls, use of an ambulatory aid may be helpful. When more assistance is needed, mobility devices may be recommended. Walking aids and mobility devices include:

- standard cane or quad cane
- standard walker
- 3- or 4-wheeled walker
- crutches
- transport chair
- manual or power wheelchair
- 3- or 4-wheeled scooter
- portable ramp

Home Care Furniture

Managing your arthritis may require changing or adding to the furniture you have in your bedroom or other rooms of your house. These products include:

- hospital bed
- bed wedge
- overbed table
- lift chair

Principles of Arthritis Management

(Adapted from *The Arthritis Foundation's Guide to Good Living with Rheumatoid Arthritis* - www.arthritis.org)

1. Each person is an individual and should be viewed as a person with a type of arthritis, rather than as a type of arthritis seen in a person. It is important to know the type of arthritis you have in order to receive the proper treatment.
2. There is no best treatment for everyone who has a particular type of arthritis, as each individual may respond differently to different treatments.
3. No single type of arthritis is always better or worse than another type.
4. Information and input from a person with arthritis can be as valuable in diagnosis and management as information from laboratory tests and x-rays.
5. In arthritis management, the emphasis is on improving function of joints and relieving pain. Dealing with pain can be the hardest part of having arthritis. You can learn to manage it and its impact on your life. Visit www.arthritis.org for information on learning and practicing pain management skills.
6. Your doctor and health care team need your involvement to help you to the fullest extent. People with arthritis and health professionals are partners in care.
7. Something can always be done to improve the situation for a person with arthritis.



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care consultants will
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how to use them.

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and ordered online at
www.homecaremedical.com