

Joint Arthritis

Painful Inflammation of a Joint(s)

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Condition Sheet



Joint arthritis can cause pain and aching in a single joint, such as a hip, or in multiple joints throughout your body, including the spine, knees, shoulders, hands, feet and more.

Joint arthritis is one of the most common painful conditions. In fact, more than 50 percent of adults 65 years or older suffer from joint arthritis.

For most types of arthritis, there is no cure. However, our network of pain management physicians can help you significantly reduce the pain of joint arthritis, and possibly slow its progression, in order to minimize impact on your activities and bring you back to a fulfilling and enjoyable life.

What is joint arthritis?

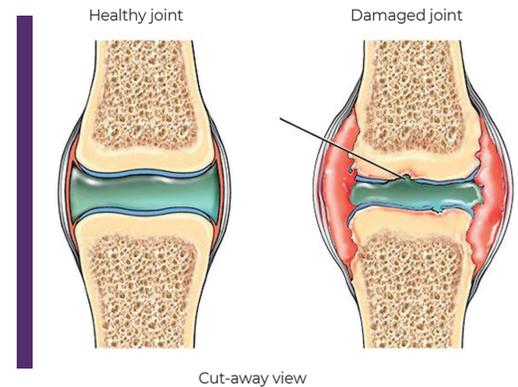
People with joint arthritis experience a breakdown of the cartilage, a protective substance that cushions the joints. The wearing down of cartilage causes your bones to rub against each other, which accounts for the pain, stiffness, swelling and restricted range of motion that can occur.

There are many types of joint arthritis, but the most common type is known as osteoarthritis, often called degenerative or wear-and-tear arthritis. It usually appears at middle age and develops slowly, caused by the wearing out of a joint through use or overuse, or even through stress from excess body weight. Although mostly a disease of older adults, joint arthritis can occur in younger individuals as well.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is another condition that also causes inflammation of the joint and surrounding tissues. However, unlike osteoarthritis, RA can also affect the organ systems of the body. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease that occurs when the body mistakenly attacks its own tissues and organs. RA is a chronic illness and may last for several years where symptoms may remain mild before progressively worsening over time. Other less common causes of joint arthritis may include infection and gout.

The need for an accurate diagnosis

Our physicians take a full medical history, perform a comprehensive physical examination, and use state-of-the-art imaging technologies



to reach a diagnosis. Since joint arthritis can be caused by a number of factors—from wear and tear to infection to immune disorders—an accurate diagnosis is the key to determining the most appropriate treatment plan.

The importance of treatment

Joint arthritis is a debilitating condition that may worsen over time if left untreated. Joint pain can be relieved using a variety of conservative measures. Oftentimes, the use of ice/heat therapy and a home exercise program can bring some of the pain under control. However, if conservative measures fail, our network of pain management centers offers several non-surgical interventions that can provide significant pain relief.

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Under fluoroscopic (x-ray) guidance, anti-inflammatory medications and local anesthetics can be injected directly into joints such as hips, spine, knees and shoulders. This can provide both immediate and long-lasting pain relief.

Injections of a synthetic lubricant can also decrease pain, improve range of motion, and put off the need for joint replacement surgery.

Other techniques such as prolotherapy, stem cell treatment, and platelet-rich plasma therapy can actually stimulate healing within the joints themselves.

The pain of joint arthritis can have far-reaching effects on the quality of your life, but it doesn't have to. Our pain specialists can work with you to design a personalized treatment plan that fits your individual goals and lifestyle.

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