

Understanding Arthritis



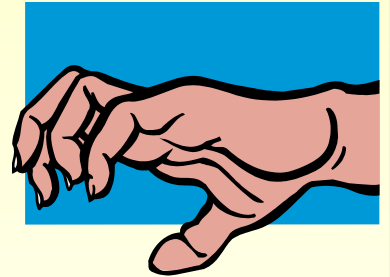
What is arthritis?

- Arthritis is a disease that causes pain and stiffness in your body.
- There are many kinds of arthritis that affect your body in different ways.
- Arthritis is a chronic disease, which means it can affect your body for a long time.



Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis.

- Osteoarthritis causes pain and stiffness in your joints.



- Joints are places where your bones meet and your body bends, such as:



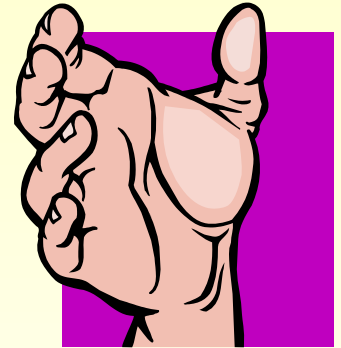
- Fingers
- Hips
- Elbows
- Knees
- Spine, neck, and lower back

Let's talk about osteoarthritis.

- In this presentation, we will focus on dealing with osteoarthritis – the most common type of arthritis.

Arthritis can make you feel uncomfortable and even hurt.

- Arthritis pain can feel like a dull ache or a sharp, shooting pain
- Arthritis can make it hard for you to move or bend your joints by causing stiffness, swelling in your joints, and bony “knobs” on your fingers.



Arthritis can make it hard to do everyday activities, such as:

- ❑ Lifting things.
- ❑ Getting dressed.
- ❑ Standing up.
- ❑ Sitting.
- ❑ Walking.



You are more likely to get arthritis if:

- ❑ You are older than 45.
- ❑ You are a woman.
- ❑ You are overweight or obese.
- ❑ A member of your family has arthritis.



You may also get arthritis if:

- You injured a joint or broke a bone in the past
- You had a job that required repetitive movement, like
 - Heavy lifting,
 - Typing, or
 - Operating a machine



If you think you have arthritis, see a doctor

- The doctor will examine your joints.
- The doctor may take tests like:
 - X-ray
 - Blood Test



Tell your doctor about what you are feeling in your body (your symptoms).

- Is the pain you feel...
 - Sharp? Burning? Dull?
- Do you notice the pain...
 - After an activity? After resting?
- Does your pain...
 - Come and go? Stay all the time?



Your doctor may prescribe medication or equipment to control pain.

- Some medications can lessen pain and swelling caused by arthritis.
- You can protect your joints and make it easier to move with:
 - Braces
 - Canes
 - Grab bars
 - Special shoes
 - Toilet seat support



The doctor may recommend:

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Pain management counseling
- Massage
- Surgery, such as replacing a joint like a hip or knee



There are things you can do to feel better

- It is especially important to stay active.
- You can learn more about living with arthritis:
 - <http://ddssafety.net/health/arthritis/living-arthritis-pain>



You can take steps to control arthritis pain.

- Take breaks from stressful activities that cause pain in your joints.
- Use good posture -- stand up and sit up straight.
- Maintain a healthy weight.



Here are more ways to control arthritis pain.

- When lifting or carrying things, use your bigger and stronger joints and muscles – like your knees and your legs.
 - You can ask your doctor or support staff for more tips.
- Keep moving – don't sit or stand in one position too long.

Learn more about what arthritis is and how to live with it.

- Arthritis Foundation – Ways to Protect Your Joints
 - <http://www.arthritis.org/protect-your-joints.php>

- American College of Rheumatology
 - <http://www.rheumatology.org/public/factsheets/index.asp>

