

Osteoarthritis – Fact Sheet

Osteoarthritis is the most common musculoskeletal disorder in Australia and affects more women than men. It is a degenerative disease where joint function becomes lost due to the cartilage becoming weak and fragile and as a result breaking down. The degeneration of cartilage exposes bone against the joint surface, inhibiting the ability to move smoothly, instead creating a grinding effect. Osteoarthritis can become quite debilitating with quality of life going downhill with severe pain, deformities and loss of joint function which may lead to surgery to replace the affected joint with an artificial replacement. The causes associated include: age, genetics, obesity, mechanical stress/occupation, misalignment of joints, joint trauma/injury, nutritional deficiencies and oestrogen deficiency. The most common joints affected are the hands, hips and knees and this condition is generally asymmetrical in nature.

Signs and Symptoms

- Pain – worsens during activity and alleviated by rest
- Bony enlargement of the joint
- Swelling of the joint
- Tenderness of the joint or its surrounds
- Limited range of motion
- Stiffness
- Cracking
- Joint deformity
- Surrounding muscles weakening

Nutritional Recommendations

- Eat a 'wholefoods diet' with lots of quality protein, fresh fruits and vegetables and quality fats to maximise the range of nutrients available. Eating seasonal is best for variety and local markets are great for this.
- Load up on antioxidants, especially vitamin C rich fruits and vegetables as it can support the growth of normal cartilage.
- Increase intake of Omega-3 fatty acids and essential fatty acids to aid inflammation.
- Include garlic, onions and eggs into your diet as they contain sulfur, an important mineral for healthy bones.
- Eat fresh pineapple as it contains an enzyme bromelain which can reduce inflammation.
- Add fresh turmeric and ginger to meals or drink in teas for their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and analgesic properties.
- Avoid saturated, trans or oxidised fats and processed foods as these foods have no nutritional value and promote inflammation in the body.
- Reduce the amount of foods from the Solanaceae family (e.g. tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant and peppers) as these foods can cause inflammation in some people.

Other Suggestions

- Gentle exercise such as walking and yoga may help relieve some pain and will keep joints moving.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.
- Wear appropriate food wear.
- Regular massages.

The pain associated with osteoarthritis can be debilitating and impair your ability to perform normal everyday tasks. Customised nutritional plans comprising of a specific food plan with the support of nutrient/herbal supplements can be very effective in the management of osteoarthritis by reducing the inflammation and pain. If you require support please visit www.good4younutrition.com.au