

... **THERE ARE MORE
... THAN 100 DIFFERENT
... FORMS OF ARTHRITIS
... AND IT CAN AFFECT
... PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.**

ARTHRITIS

Arthritis is a condition that affects the joints. The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis. Other types include rheumatoid arthritis, gout and ankylosing spondylitis.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF ARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis (OA) mainly occurs in people 45 years and older. The risk of this condition increases with age. It most commonly affects the knees, hips and hands but can also affect the feet and the shoulders. Hand osteoarthritis often runs in families while being overweight and/or having a previous injury puts people at risk of knee and hip osteoarthritis.

Treatment varies depending on the joint affected and how severe it is. It can usually be managed with simple painkillers, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents and exercise. In people who are overweight, weight loss can improve symptoms and slow progression of the arthritis. Joint replacement may be needed for severe symptoms.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) can occur at any age and is more common among women. It is an autoimmune disease that causes pain, swelling and stiffness in the joints, often worse in the morning. Most commonly it is symmetrical (affecting the same joints on both sides). If untreated, the disease can cause damage to the joints therefore early diagnosis is crucial.



While there is no cure, treatments have improved remarkably over the past 20 years and early treatment can prevent or limit joint damage.

Gout occurs in middle-aged men and older people who take diuretic tablets (known as water pills). Gout most commonly occurs as a sudden attack in a single joint, often the big toe, which becomes red, swollen and extremely painful.

Gout is caused by a build-up of a waste product, uric acid, which forms crystals in joints. Highly effective treatment is available to treat both the acute attack and to prevent further attacks.

Ankylosing spondylitis (AS) is a condition that mainly affects the spine and usually affects young adults (15 to 45 years). Pain and stiffness in the back and buttocks are generally worse after rest and relieved by exercise. It is more likely if you have a family history and the HLA-B27 gene is associated with the condition.

Regular exercise is helpful as are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents and if needed, the newer biologic, disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARD)s are highly effective in controlling the symptoms.

TIPS FOR MANAGING ARTHRITIS

- Stay active
- Learn ways to manage the pain
- Keep a healthy weight and eat nutritious food
- Protect your joints
- Work closely with your healthcare team
- Join a peer support group

LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS

Living with arthritis can differ from person to person and symptoms can vary from day to day. Treatment and management options vary with the type of arthritis, its severity and the parts of the body affected.

Learning to manage the condition is extremely important. A rheumatologist can diagnose arthritis and help you to decide upon the right treatment.

MORE INFORMATION

www.arthritisaustralia.com.au
www.rheumatology.org.au