



Understanding Osteoarthritis

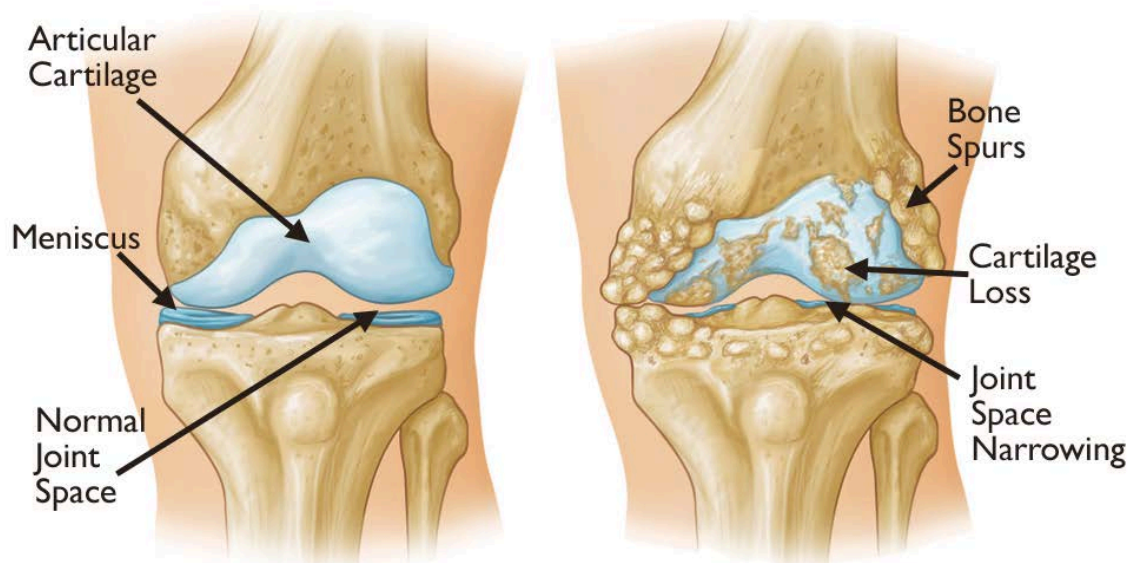
A Patient Information Pamphlet

Introduction :

We are providing you with important information about Osteoarthritis. Please read this information sheet carefully and feel free to ask any questions or seek clarification from us.

What is Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a common joint disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. It occurs when the protective cartilage that cushions the ends of your bones wears down over time, leading to pain, stiffness, and reduced mobility in the affected joints. While osteoarthritis can occur in any joint, it most commonly affects the knees, hips, hands, and spine.



What are the causes and symptoms?

Causes

While the exact cause of osteoarthritis is not fully understood, several factors can increase your risk of developing the condition, including:

- **Aging:** Osteoarthritis becomes more common as you get older.
- **Joint injury:** Previous joint injuries or trauma can increase the likelihood of osteoarthritis.
- **Obesity:** Excess weight puts added stress on the joints, particularly the knees and hips.
- **Genetics:** A family history of osteoarthritis may predispose you to the condition.
- **Occupation:** Jobs that involve repetitive movements or heavy lifting may increase the risk of osteoarthritis.

Symptoms

Joint pain, especially after activity or prolonged periods of rest

- Stiffness, particularly in the morning or after sitting for a long time
- Swelling or tenderness in the affected joints
- Reduced range of motion and difficulty moving the joint
- Grating sensation or popping noises when moving the joint
- Causes and Risk Factors

Diagnosis and Treatment Options :

If you are experiencing symptoms of osteoarthritis, it's essential to consult with a healthcare professional for an accurate diagnosis. Diagnosis typically involves a physical examination, imaging tests (such as **X-rays or MRI scans**), and a review of your medical history.

Treatment for osteoarthritis aims to relieve pain, improve joint function, and slow down the progression of the disease. Depending on the severity of your symptoms, treatment options may include:

- **Medications:** Over-the-counter pain relievers, such as acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), can help alleviate pain and inflammation.

- **Physical therapy:** Exercises and stretches prescribed by a physical therapist can improve joint flexibility, strength, and range of motion.
- **Lifestyle modifications:** Maintaining a healthy weight, engaging in regular exercise, and using assistive devices (such as braces or splints) can help manage symptoms and protect your joints.
- **Injections:** Corticosteroid injections or hyaluronic acid injections may be recommended to reduce pain and inflammation in the affected joints.
- **Surgery:** In severe cases of osteoarthritis, joint replacement surgery may be necessary to replace damaged joint surfaces with artificial implants.

• **Living with Osteoarthritis**

While osteoarthritis can be challenging to manage, there are steps you can take to improve your quality of life and minimize the impact of the condition:

- **Stay active:** Regular exercise, such as walking, swimming, or cycling, can help strengthen the muscles around your joints and reduce pain and stiffness.
- **Maintain a healthy weight:** Losing excess weight can alleviate pressure on your joints and reduce pain and inflammation.
- **Use joint protection techniques:** Avoid activities that put excessive strain on your joints, and use proper body mechanics when lifting or carrying objects.
- **Practice self-care:** Apply heat or cold packs to relieve pain and stiffness, and consider trying relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or meditation, to manage stress and anxiety.



Getting Support

Living with osteoarthritis can be challenging, but you don't have to face it alone. Reach out to friends, family members, or support groups for emotional support and practical assistance. Additionally, don't hesitate to discuss your concerns and treatment options with your healthcare provider—they're here to help you every step of the way.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

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