



Getting a Grip
on arthritis

A Resource Kit for People with Arthritis



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Introduction to Getting a Grip on Arthritis®

This resource kit provides information about arthritis and its management. There is information about health care providers who can help you manage your arthritis through exercise, healthy eating, and medications. You will find tips for managing arthritis pain and solving everyday problems, as well as recommended books, videos and Websites where you can learn more. Some sections provide checklists that you may wish to complete before meeting with your health care team.

Partners in Getting a Grip on Arthritis®

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 Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre
 The Arthritis Society

Production of this document has been made possible by a financial contribution from the Primary Health Care Transition Fund, Health Canada. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official policies of Health Canada.

Support for the original development of the 'Getting a Grip on Arthritis' initiative was provided by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

What is Arthritis?

The word *arthritis* means inflammation of the joints. This results in joint pain, stiffness, redness, and swelling.

Checklist #1

Speak with your health care provider if you answer YES to any of the following questions:

- Have you experienced pain in your joints for six weeks or more?
- Do you feel stiff or have trouble moving your joints when you get up?
- Do you have swelling in any of your joints?
- Is joint pain interfering with your work or daily activities?

There are more than 100 types of arthritis. Some types of arthritis involve more than just the joints. If your doctor tells you that you have arthritis, ask what type you have. It is important to know what type of arthritis you have so that you can learn more and have a treatment plan developed specifically for you. There are many things you can do to help yourself feel better.

Important Messages for People with Arthritis

If you have arthritis, it is important that you manage your condition by:

- knowing the type of arthritis you have;
- actively participating in making decisions about your care;
- getting the support and resources you need;
- exercising regularly;
- maintaining a healthy weight;
- knowing about your medications;
- seeing the right health care providers;
- telling your health care providers about all of the prescription and non-prescription medications you take;
- cooperating fully with the course of treatment that you plan and agree to as a member of your health care team.

There are many resources that can help you learn about and cope with arthritis. This resource kit will get you started and The Arthritis Society can provide information about other resources. The Arthritis Society offers information and a variety of education, support, and exercise programs, such as the Arthritis Self-Management Program. Contact The Arthritis Society by phoning the information line at 1-800-321-1433 or by visiting the Website at www.arthritis.ca.



Your Arthritis Health Care Team

Many people can help you manage your arthritis. It is important that you are an active member of your health care team. **Your team may include a variety of health care providers depending on your needs and the community you live in.** For example, your team may include a family doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse, rheumatologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker, pharmacist, dietitian and/or orthopedic surgeon.



Role of the Family Doctor/Nurse Practitioner/Nurse:

Your family doctor, nurse practitioner or nurse will take your health history and review your symptoms. To confirm the type of arthritis you have he or she will do a detailed health interview, a physical examination, and tests such as blood work and x-rays. The information gathered will help in the development of your personal treatment plan.

The doctor, nurse, or nurse practitioner will discuss treatment options, which include:

- medications;
- referral to other health professionals such as a physiotherapist, occupational therapist, social worker, and/or dietitian;
- consultation with specialists such as a rheumatologist (arthritis specialist), an internal medicine specialist, or an orthopedic surgeon (surgical specialist for bones and joints);
- recommendations for education, exercise or weight management programs.

The doctor, nurse, or nurse practitioner will participate in your ongoing care by:

- dealing with any new or ongoing questions and concerns you have about pain control, treatments, or your condition;
- ordering regular blood tests to monitor your well-being and response to medications;
- providing follow-up should you require a medication change;
- directing you to the correct people if you need help with work-related or financial issues that may arise due to your arthritis;
- communicating with the other health care providers on your team.

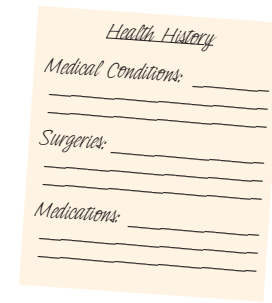


Your Role on the Health Care Team

It is important to maintain an up-to-date record of your health and to give this to your health care team.

Your health history should include a list of:

- medical conditions and surgeries from childhood to the present;
- all medications (including vitamins and herbal supplements) you are now taking or have taken in the past, and their dosages. For medications you have stopped, record the reason 'why';
- all treatments that you have had and if they were helpful or not.



The Team Needs You To:

- make notes, with dates, of any changes in your condition as well as any side effects from medications;
- list any treatments you have had since your last appointment;
- bring your health notes to your appointment;
- bring a family member or friend with you if you need help to remember the information discussed during your appointment;
- be sure to have scheduled blood work and other tests done so your progress can be checked;
- be on time for your appointment. If you need to reschedule, phone the office as far in advance as possible;
- tell your health care provider, in advance, if you may need a longer appointment than usual to discuss questions about your arthritis or treatment;
- learn about your type of arthritis and bring any questions to your next appointment so that your health care provider can answer your questions and discuss your concerns. If you do not understand the answers, ask more questions!

Checklist #2

If you are not able to answer the following questions, speak with your health care team to learn more:

- What kind of arthritis do I have?
- How do I deal with the pain of arthritis?
- Where can I get support to help me with:
 - personal care and household chores?
 - the impact of arthritis on my financial situation?
 - my feelings about having arthritis?
 - the way my family and friends respond to my arthritis?
- What kinds of exercises will help me?
- Do I need to lose or gain weight?
- What are the benefits and risks of my arthritis medication(s)?
- Are there any assistive devices or types of equipment that would help me?
- Where can I get more information about my arthritis and how to manage it?
- Do I need to see any other health care providers such as:
 - a rheumatologist?
 - an occupational therapist, physiotherapist, social worker or dietitian?
 - an orthopedic surgeon?

How Can a Rheumatologist Help?

A rheumatologist is a doctor who specializes in disorders that cause problems with joints, ligaments and muscle tissue.

Your family doctor may refer you to a rheumatologist for one or more of the following reasons:

- to determine whether you have arthritis or to confirm the diagnosis;
- if you are not able to work or do your usual daily activities;
- if you have any arthritis complications;
- if your arthritis medication is causing side effects;
- if your arthritis symptoms are not well controlled.

How Can an Occupational Therapist Help?

Occupational therapists (OTs) are health care providers who help people with arthritis to function independently—at home, in the workplace and in the community. OTs are university-educated and registered to practice by the regulatory organization in their province.

An occupational therapist may help you to:

- find easier ways of doing daily tasks such as cooking, gardening and personal care;
- get special equipment, such as a raised toilet seat or jar opener, to make life easier;
- learn ways to relieve pain and reduce stress on your joints (e.g. by using splints or wearing proper shoes);
- learn ways to conserve or increase your energy level;
- consider ways to adapt your home, vehicle or workplace;
- cope with stress and any added demands caused by arthritis;
- continue to do your hobbies and leisure activities;
- explore options that will help you keep doing what is important to you.

How can I arrange to see an occupational therapist?

Ask your health care provider what occupational therapy services are available in your community. Check whether the cost of these services is covered by your employer, your provincial health plan, or your personal insurance plan.



How Can a Physiotherapist Help?

Experts agree that people with arthritis can exercise safely without doing damage to their joints. This is true for people of all ages. The best way to find out what exercises are best for you is to see a registered physiotherapist (PT).

Physiotherapists, also called physical therapists, have a complete understanding of how the body works. They are university-educated and registered to practice by the regulatory organization in their province.

Your physiotherapist will work with you to design a treatment plan and exercise program that meets your needs. (See “Exercise” section for more information about exercise.)

A physiotherapist may also help you to:

- gain more control over your arthritis symptoms;
- use pain medications less often;
- deal with stiffness;
- choose devices, such as a brace, cane or walker, to help you move around more easily and safely;
- become stronger and have more energy;
- set up a home program of regular exercise.

A physiotherapist can also help you learn more about your disease and how to access other services in your community and can suggest how your family and friends can be of assistance.

How can I arrange to see a physiotherapist?

Ask your health care provider what physiotherapy services are available in your community. Check whether the cost of these services is covered by your employer, your provincial health plan, or your personal insurance plan.

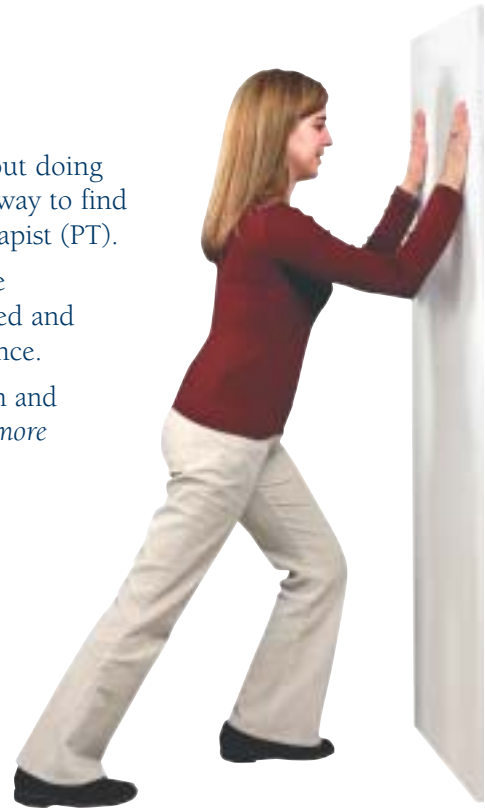
How Can a Social Worker Help?

Arthritis can affect many aspects of your life and, at times, can make simple tasks difficult. Arthritis can be frustrating. Other people may not realize how painful arthritis can be or how tired you can feel—even after a rest. Family and friends may tell you how well you *look*—yet the truth is you are not *feeling* well.

Social workers can help you and your family deal with these challenges.

Social workers can help:

- if you need someone to talk to about your arthritis problems;
- if you'd like to speak with other people who have arthritis to find out what it's like for them and how they cope;
- if you think your family needs support, or a better understanding of how your arthritis affects you;
- when you feel angry or stressed and need to share your feelings with someone;
- when you need information about community resources such as Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits, your provincial drug plan, subsidized housing, transportation, financial assistance, or vocational training.



How can I arrange to see a social worker?

Ask your health care provider what social work services are available in your community. Check whether the cost of these services is covered by your employer, your provincial health plan, or your personal insurance plan.

How Can a Pharmacist Help?

Pharmacists are health care providers who dispense medications and can teach you the best way to use them. They are university-educated and registered to practice by the regulatory organization in their province.

Each time you get a prescription filled at a pharmacy, the pharmacist performs the following activities:

- checks that the medication is suitable for the diagnosis;
- checks that the dose and length of time you should take the medication is correct;
- checks that this medication will not cause problems with other medication you are taking, with other conditions or allergies that you may have, or with the food you eat;
- checks that the medication, directions and quantity prescribed by the doctor have been prepared for you.

The pharmacist will talk with you and/or your doctor if a problem is found. Your medication will not be dispensed until that problem is fixed.



Your pharmacist can help you use and manage your medications.

Pharmacists are trained to understand disease conditions and how medications work. Your pharmacist can help you get the most benefit from your medication by giving you information about your type of arthritis, and “how” the medication ordered for you is expected to help.

Checklist #3

If you are not able to answer the following questions for each of the medications you are taking, speak with your pharmacist to learn more:

- What is the name of the medication and what does it do?
- How much and how often should I take it?
- How long will I be taking this medication?
- Should I take it with food?
- What are the possible side effects and what should I do if they occur?
- When can I expect to see improvements?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Where should I keep or store this medication?
- Is there anything that I should avoid while taking this medication, such as non-prescription pain relievers like acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen?

Other services a pharmacist can offer include:

- easy-open prescription bottles;
- special medication packaging called blister packing to help if you take several medications and/or have difficulty remembering when to take your medication;
- recommendations for non-prescription medications to help with side effects;
- advice on possible alternative prescription or non-prescription therapies, their effectiveness, cost, and side effects;
- suggestions about herbal or other non-traditional therapies;
- developing a complete medication care plan for your needs.

Speak with your pharmacist to learn more about your medications and other services offered to help you use and manage your medications better. (See “Medication” section for more information.)

How Can a Dietitian Help?

Registered dietitians are health care providers who can help people with arthritis learn ways to plan, prepare and eat balanced, nutritious meals that will aid in achieving and maintaining healthy body weight. Dietitians are university-educated and registered to practice by the regulatory organization in their province.

A dietitian can work with you to help you:

- develop healthy eating and snacking habits;
- read and use nutrition labels;
- plan balanced meals;
- know when to use vitamin and/or mineral supplements;
- understand information about nutrition available in the media;
- develop a specific eating plan to help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight;
- learn how to make good food choices on a budget;
- find a local weight loss program.

How can I arrange to see a dietitian?

Ask your health care provider what dietitian services are available in your community. Check whether the cost of these services is covered by your employer, your provincial health plan, or your personal insurance plan.

The Role of the Orthopedic Surgeon

An orthopedic surgeon is a doctor who is trained in surgical procedures that prevent or correct problems of the bones, joints and tissues around the joints. Your family doctor may refer you to an orthopedic surgeon if your arthritis symptoms do not respond to conservative treatment (e.g., medications, regular exercise, assistive devices, weight loss, physical and occupational therapy or joint injections with cortisone and hyaluronan). (See “Surgery” section for more information.)

Tips for Managing Arthritis Pain, Avoiding Injuries, and Solving Everyday Problems



If you have arthritis, you can reduce wear and tear on your joints by:

- using good posture at all times (while lying down, sitting, standing, walking or taking part in work-related, recreational or other activities);
- keeping the muscles around your joints strong by exercising regularly;
- staying at a healthy weight by exercising and eating a balanced diet;
- changing the way you do tasks that require a lot of bending or carrying heavy loads;
- changing your position often;
- protecting your joints by wearing splints, braces, knee pads and supportive shoes or boots.

Consult your health care providers to learn more.

Managing Pain and Fatigue

If you have arthritis, you may get tired easily.

You can conserve or increase your energy level by following the **Five Ps of Energy Conservation**.

1. **Pacing:** Break large tasks into several smaller ones. Do some jobs today and some another day.
2. **Positioning:** Use correct posture and body positions while sitting, standing, taking part in recreational or other activities—and even while asleep! Make sure beds, chairs, desks, tables and computer keyboards are at a comfortable height. Tell other people that you have arthritis so they can be careful (e.g., when having your hair washed at the barber or beauty salon, you may require extra support for your neck).
3. **Planning:** Make a list of things you have to do during the day. Plan to do the most difficult tasks when you're feeling your best and are least stiff—such as after taking your pain medication or after having a bath or shower. Keep the work you need to do close by and organized.
4. **Prioritizing:** Do only what you decide is most important. Eliminate less important things or ask someone to help you with them.



5. **Problem Solving:** Increase your energy, reduce pain, and prevent more wear and tear on your joints by asking yourself these questions:
- Is there an easier and better way of doing this, such as pushing instead of pulling, sliding instead of lifting, or using two hands instead of one?
 - Is there some device, such as an electrical appliance, piece of equipment or supportive splint, which would make this job easier?
 - Do I really need to do this? Concentrate on activities that mean the most to you and scale down the rest. If a task really isn't important, choose not to do it or plan to do it another time.
 - Can someone else do this for me? If so, ask for help.



Here are two examples of good problem solving.

If you have trouble opening jars because of pain in your hands, try these methods:

- grip the jar between your knees and use two hands to open it;
- use a jar opener or rubber gripper, or wear a wrist or thumb splint;
- buy products that come in easy-to-open containers, such as frozen food packs instead of cans or jars;
- ask someone for help.

If you have trouble going up and down stairs because of pain or stiffness in your knees:

- go up and down sideways;
- use a handrail, cane or half-step—a device that cuts the height of the stair in half;
- reduce the number of times you have to go up and down stairs by planning ahead;
- ask someone to take things up and down stairs for you.

For more information visit www.arthritis.ca/tips



Exercise: The Key to Better Health and Mobility

People with arthritis can exercise safely without doing damage to their joints. Stronger muscles help protect the joints.

Benefits of Exercise for People with Arthritis

Exercise helps to keep your bones, joints, and muscles healthy. You can start to exercise at any age, even if you have not exercised much in the past.

Regular exercise can:

- reduce the symptoms of arthritis and result in less pain;
- improve your walking;
- improve and maintain your mood;
- help you maintain a healthy weight.

People who are overweight are more likely to develop arthritis in their knee joints. Exercise, combined with a balanced diet, is the best way to maintain a healthy weight. Losing weight can reduce the pain in your joints.

(See “Healthy Eating” section for more suggestions.)

Recommended Exercises and Activities

Activities that use large muscles, such as those in your arms and legs, are the most important part of any fitness program. Health care providers often recommend:

- exercise in water/swimming
- walking
- cycling
- dancing

Work up to exercising for a total of at least 30 minutes, three to five times a week. Regular exercise is the key to success, but you don't have to do it all at one time.





Three 10-minute periods of exercise a day work just as well as one 30-minute session.

Do Weight-Bearing Exercises. Activities such as walking help to build strong bones and prevent osteoporosis.

Exercise with Weights. Exercising with hand and ankle weights or weight machines is another way to increase strength and reduce pain without making the joints worse. Consult a physiotherapist or fitness instructor. *(See section called “Your Team” for more information about physiotherapists.)*

Exercise in Warm Water. Some people find it easier to exercise in warm water. Many community recreation centres have warm water exercise programs suitable for people with arthritis.

Working out with a friend or joining an exercise group can make the experience more enjoyable.

A Few Words of Caution!

Take it easy at the beginning. It's natural to feel your heart beat a little faster, your breathing speed up a little, and your body get warmer. Make sure you can speak normally while you're exercising.

Talk to your health care provider about your exercise plans if you have:

- a heart condition;
- chest pain;
- high blood pressure;
- poor balance or dizziness;
- any questions.

See a physiotherapist before you begin an exercise program if you:

- have severe arthritis;
- have problem joints;
- feel you can't exercise because of your arthritis;
- have had problems with exercise in the past;
- have never exercised.



Tips for Healthy Eating

A healthy diet can help you maintain the energy you need for work and leisure activities.

- Eat a wide variety of foods including protein (meat, poultry, fish), dairy products, and plenty of whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Avoid fad diets.
- Maintain a healthy weight by eating regular meals with moderate portions.
- Consult *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* to learn more about a balanced diet and appropriate portion sizes. *Canada's Food Guide* is available through your local health department or at the Health Canada Website (www.hc-sc.gc.ca).

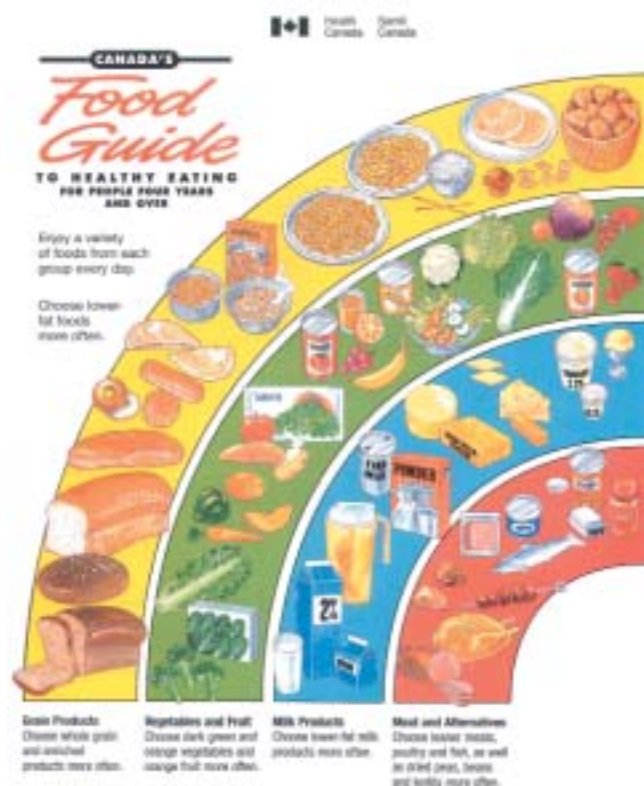
Extra body weight adds unnecessary stress to painful knee joints. For people who are overweight, a loss of 10 pounds may help reduce knee pain.

Weight Loss Tips

- Set realistic goals. A dietitian can help you in this process. (See section called "Your Team" for information about dietitians.)
- Eat smaller meals more frequently (every 4-6 hours).
- Limit liquid calories such as pop, juice, and alcohol. Drink water.
- Avoid high sugar, high fat foods.
- Include vegetables, fruit and whole grains in your daily diet.
- Use a food diary to record everything you eat and drink (be specific).
- Be aware of portion sizes (e.g. 1 cup cooked pasta = 2 servings of grain products and 3 oz. cooked fish, chicken or poultry = 1 serving of meat and alternates). You may find it helpful to weigh and measure food for two weeks to familiarize yourself with serving size portions.
- Remember that regular exercise can assist with weight loss and maintenance.
- Join a weight loss program in your community.

Tips for people with arthritis who need to gain weight

- Eat frequently.
- Add heart healthy fats (liquid oils, non-hydrogenated margarine) to soups and vegetables.
- Snack on nuts, seeds and dried fruits.
- Consider nutritional supplements (e.g. Ensure™, Boost™, Carnation Breakfast Anytime™) for extra energy and protein. Your dietitian can help in selecting the right product for you.



7Source: Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, Health Canada, September 2004. Reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2004.

Arthritis Medications

Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol, Atasol, Temptra)

Acetaminophen is a painkiller. It is not used to treat inflammation (swelling, heat and redness). It is the medication of choice for treating the mild to moderate pain of osteoarthritis (OA). It may be used for pain relief in addition to other arthritis medications in inflammatory types of arthritis such as rheumatoid arthritis.

How often do I need to take acetaminophen?

Acetaminophen acts quickly to improve mild to moderate pain (in about 20 minutes). It needs to be taken regularly (every four to six hours) to control arthritis pain. Check with your doctor about how much acetaminophen you should take. Do not take acetaminophen if you have liver or kidney disease or if you have an alcohol problem, unless you first check with your doctor.

What are the side effects?

Acetaminophen is very safe and has few side effects. It does not upset the stomach or cause ringing in the ears as other pain medications can. Skin rashes and minor allergic reactions are rare.

The maximum daily dose of four grams cannot be exceeded or side effects can occur.

What about other pain killers?

Some people may need stronger painkillers. Discuss these options with your health care provider.

Acetylsalicylic Acid (ASA) and other Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

ASA (e.g. Aspirin, Novasen, Entrophen) and other NSAIDs (e.g. naproxen, ibuprofen, diclofenac sodium) are common medications used for treating the moderate to severe symptoms of arthritis, but can also cause serious side effects. If you have any questions about these medications, talk to your health care provider or pharmacist.

What are NSAIDs?

NSAIDs are a group of drugs that act on two specific enzymes in your body (COX-1 and COX-2) to help reduce the swelling, pain and stiffness of arthritis.

How often and for how long will I have to take NSAIDs?

The dose and the length of time you need to take NSAIDs depend on the type of arthritis and amount of inflammation you have. Take your medication exactly as prescribed by your doctor. To reduce inflammation, NSAIDs must be taken consistently. Do not skip doses. It may take 2-4 weeks of continuous use before you will feel any improvement.

What are the side effects?

Any medication can cause side effects. This is true of ASA and other NSAIDs as well. It's important that you talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist about possible side effects before you begin taking these medications. The most common side effects include stomach and/or bowel upset, indigestion, and nausea. Stomach ulcers may occur if NSAIDs are taken for a long time. A rare but serious side effect is gastrointestinal bleeding with symptoms of black/tarry stools and vomiting blood.

Common NSAID Side Effects

Symptom	Symptom Frequency	Should I Call My Doctor?
Nausea, heartburn	Common	If severe or persistent
Stomach pain, cramps	Common	If severe or persistent
Constipation	Common	If severe or persistent
Vomiting, diarrhea	Rare	If severe or persistent
ringing in the ears, hearing loss	Rare	Yes
Skin rash all over body	Rare	Yes
Black or blood stained stools	Rare	Yes
Wheezing, breathlessness	Rare	Yes
Fluid retention	Rare	Yes
Jaundice, brown urine	Rare	Yes

What are the risk factors for a stomach bleed?

You are more likely to experience stomach bleeding if you:

- are over 60 years of age;
- have had ulcers in the past;
- have experienced stomach bleeding in the past;
- have other health problems, such as diabetes or heart disease;
- are taking cortisone, or
- are taking anticoagulants (blood thinners).

How can I protect my stomach?

Talk to your doctor about your risk for stomach problems to determine your need for stomach protection.

There are so many NSAIDs. Which one do I take?

Your doctor may try a few NSAIDs before finding one that works well for you. ASA is found in the drug store under many different formulas and names. It may be advertised as “arthritis extra strength,” buffered ASA, or coated ASA. Do not take ASA products that contain extra ingredients such as caffeine or antihistamines.

What are COX-2 inhibitors?

COX-2 inhibitors are another type of NSAID. Traditional NSAIDs block COX-1 and COX-2 enzymes. COX-1 enzymes protect the stomach. By blocking only COX-2 enzymes, COX-2 inhibitors cause less damage to the stomach lining. These drugs are not stronger than the other NSAIDs, but have the advantage of causing fewer ulcers. However, they are more expensive and may not be covered by your drug benefit plans.

Medication Tips

- The cost of medication can vary from store to store. Brand name medications are generally more expensive than generic medications. Most pharmacies carry generic acetaminophen.
- A few people taking NSAIDs notice they are more sensitive to the sun. Make sure you use a sun-screen with a SPF of at least 15.
- Some people are confused about the variety of names of arthritis medications. Consult your health care provider or pharmacist or visit www.arthritis.ca/tips/medications for more information.

Other medications for rheumatoid arthritis

You can learn more about medications called Disease Modifying Anti-Rheumatic Drugs (DMARDs) and Biologic Response Modifiers from your health care provider or from The Arthritis Society.

Intra-Articular (or Joint) Injections

Cortisone Injections

What is a cortisone injection?

A cortisone injection is a treatment option to relieve painful, swollen joints that have not improved with other treatments. Using a sterile needle, the cortisone is placed into the joint. Cortisone is a hormone that is excreted normally by the body's adrenal gland to help reduce inflammation. Doctors inject cortisone into a joint to reduce swelling and pain.

What does the procedure involve?

It is a simple and quick procedure that can be done in the doctor's office. A local anaesthetic is applied to the injection site and the injection is given directly into the joint. Cortisone injections can be repeated up to four times a year in the same joint.

It may help to rest the joint after the injection. This will keep the cortisone in the joint and allow the medication to work more effectively. Rest injected hips, knees or ankles for three days and injected shoulders, elbows or wrists for two days.

What will the injection do and how long will the benefit last?

In most people, the injection will reduce the swelling and pain. It can also improve joint movement and allow you to take part in your usual activities or to continue your exercise program.

You should start to feel an improvement in your joint within two days. Benefits can last a few weeks or several months. If your relief only lasts for a few days, discuss this with your doctor.

What are the advantages of cortisone injections?

Advantages include:

- a rapid response;
- local treatment of the injected joint.

Other types of cortisone injections

Cortisone injections can also be used to treat inflammation of tendons and other structures around the joint. Consult your doctor for more information.

Are there any side effects?

Side effects are very rare and should be discussed with your doctor. There is a slight risk of flaring of arthritis symptoms, skin damage and tendon rupture. If you have increased pain after the injection, you may be sensitive to one of the materials mixed with the cortisone. Talk to your doctor about trying another form of cortisone.

Intra-articular (or joint) injections are not recommended for people with active infections or with a skin rash over the injection site.

If you believe that an intra-articular injection is right for you or if you have any further questions, consult your doctor.

Hyaluronan Injections**What is a hyaluronan injection?**

Hyaluronan is a substance that may be injected into the knee joint to provide long-term pain relief for people with mild to moderate osteoarthritis. These injections are meant to improve the quality of the synovial fluid in the joint. Injections are given weekly for three to five weeks. Benefits may last up to six months. These injections are expensive (more than \$100 per injection). Discuss this option with your doctor.

Surgery for Arthritis

Surgery may help if you:

- have joint pain at rest;
- have joint pain at night which disturbs your sleep;
- are unable to do the things that are important to you because of your arthritis;
- are unable to work or carry out your usual activities because of your arthritis.

The most common type of arthritis surgery is a joint replacement. Hip and knee joint replacements are now common and surgery for other joints is becoming more common (e.g., hand, thumb or other joints of your upper limbs).

Checklist #4

If you are considering surgery, ask the surgeon the following questions:

- What are the short and long-term risks of surgery?
- How long will the new joint last?
- Will I have a choice of anaesthetics? Will a general anaesthetic be required?
- Will I need a blood transfusion? Can I donate my own blood for surgery?
- Is there a pre-operative education program that I can attend?
- What will I be able to do after the surgery and how much help will I need when I go home? (E.g., who will walk my dog, get my groceries, do my laundry? Will I be able to climb stairs? Who will take care of other members of my family?)
- Will I need physiotherapy after the surgery? Where do I need to go for therapy and how much will it cost? Will I need to go to a rehabilitation centre?
- Will I need any equipment after surgery? (E.g. canes, raised toilet seats, bath bench) Will I need a splint or cast and how much will it cost?
- How long will I be off work?
- Can I speak with someone who has had this surgery?

Tips if you are considering surgery

- Plan ahead so you have help when you go home. Home help may be available but if there is a wait period, you may need to make short-term plans for extra help.
- Wait lists to see a surgeon and for joint replacement surgery may be long so get your name on the list early. There may also be a waiting period for therapy after surgery.
- Talk to your family about the surgery. It's important that you have support for a few weeks after the surgery. Do you have transportation to and from surgery, doctor follow-up visits and therapy after the surgery? Will you be able to get in and out of your vehicle?
- You may have fears about surgery or you may not be ready to make this decision. Talk to your health care provider about your concerns.

Recommended Books, Videos and Websites

How to Choose What Information to Use

There are many different arthritis-related resources available in bookstores and over the Internet.

Checklist #5

When deciding what information to use, you may wish to consider the following questions:

- Is the author an expert in the field with recognized credentials?
- Is the information up-to-date and relevant to my type of arthritis and situation?
- Is the information Canadian-based?
- Is the resource easy to use, with understandable, reader-friendly language?
- Does the resource provide well-balanced information and avoid promises of “quick fix” solutions or “cures”?
- Does the information encourage me to consult with my physician or health care team?

When you are “surfing the net,” consider the source of the information. Be cautious of information that is designed to sell something such as a particular product or service. Some clues about the type of site you are visiting may be available in the Website address. For example, generally, Websites that end in “.ca” tend to be Canadian sites and those that end in “.com” tend to be commercial sites. Some Websites end in “.edu” which indicates that they are educational institutions. When in doubt about the quality of any information, it is best to consult with your health care provider.

The Arthritis Society Website Resources



The Website of The Arthritis Society (www.arthritis.ca) provides a wide range of information in both English and French about types of arthritis, tips for living well with arthritis, and programs available across Canada.

Research: There is information about arthritis research (www.arthritis.ca/research) including Cochrane Reviews of Arthritis Treatments.

Advocacy: There is specific information for people who want to advocate on behalf of people with arthritis (www.arthritis.ca/advocacy). The resources include facts and figures about arthritis, The Canadian Arthritis Bill of Rights, information about provincial advocacy initiatives, and information about resources such as the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance (CAPA) (www.arthritis.ca/capa.) CAPA is an organization led by Canadians living with arthritis who are dedicated to improving arthritis care and services. The network of advocates is engaged at national, provincial and local levels on issues important to people with arthritis such as obtaining timely access to appropriate medications, health professionals and services; expanding patient involvement in arthritis research, planning and policy development; and supporting people with arthritis in their efforts to obtain services and other assistance they require.

Education: There is specific information on the Website about arthritis and its treatment, as well as information about other educational programs offered by The Arthritis Society. The Arthritis Self-Management Program (ASMP) is a health promotion program designed to help people with arthritis better understand and cope with arthritis and to take an active role in its management. ASMP is led by trained volunteers over a six-week period in weekly two-hour sessions. The Arthritis Society also offers a variety of educational forums for the public. Patient Partners® in Arthritis is a national program wherein trained volunteers with arthritis assist as patient educators in teaching health care providers and students about arthritis and its assessment.

If you have not been to the Website of The Arthritis Society before, you may wish to look at the “First Time Visitor” information on the opening page. This section will identify some key areas that may be of interest to you. When you visit the site map, you will see the wide variety of resources available on The Arthritis Society Website including the Arthritis Bookstore; Ask the Expert; and the Open Forum Community.

Recommended books and videos

This section provides information about recommended books and videos. To find or review any of the books and videos:

- check your local library or bookstore;
- check with your health care provider;
- call your local office of The Arthritis Society or check its Website at www.arthritis.ca;
- call The Arthritis Society, toll-free, at 1-800-321-1433;
- call the Arthritis Foundation, toll-free, at 1-800-283-7800 or check its Website at www.arthritis.org/afstore.

Books for General Information On Arthritis



Title: Living Well with Arthritis 

Authors: Dianne Mosher, Howard Stein and Gunnar Kraag

Year of Publication: 2002

Approximate Cost: \$29

ISBN: 0-670-04337-0

Publisher: Viking Canada

Description: Written by three Canadian rheumatologists, this book is a comprehensive, readable reference book outlining many types of arthritis. It also describes the arthritis health care team and current treatments, including medications, complementary therapies, exercise, and surgical procedures. Common concerns dealing with pain and fatigue, sexuality, pregnancy, disability and workplace issues are addressed. Resources available in Canada are listed.



Title: **Rheumatoid Arthritis: Plan to Win** 🍁

Authors: Cheryl Koehn, Taysha Palmer and John Esdaile

Year of Publication: 2002

Approximate Cost: \$40

ISBN: 0-19-513056-1

Publisher: Oxford University Press, New York

Description: Co-authored by a person with arthritis, a science writer and a Canadian rheumatologist, this book provides information specifically regarding rheumatoid arthritis and its treatments. Topics include medications, exercise, diet and nutrition, complementary and alternative medicine, the mindbody connection, relationships and sexuality, work and leisure, surgery, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause.



Title: **Arthritis**, third edition 🍁

Author: John Marcus Thompson

Year of Publication: 2005

Approximate Cost: \$25

ISBN: 1-55263-673-9

Publisher: Key Porter Books, Ontario

Description: Written by a Canadian rheumatologist as a source book for patients, this book outlines different types of arthritis, including arthritis in children. It describes how to interpret the symptoms of the disease and how a diagnosis is made. Conventional, complementary and alternative treatments are outlined.



Title: **The Essential Arthritis Cookbook**

Author: The Arthritis Centre

Year of Publication: 1995

Approximate Cost: \$40

ISBN: 0-9620471-6-3

Publisher: Appletree Press, Inc., Minnesota

Description: Designed for people with arthritis, fibromyalgia, chronic pain and fatigue, this book demonstrates that paying attention to diet may help reduce pain, swelling and stiffness. It describes ways of changing eating and cooking habits to make life easier and contains 125 easy-to-prepare recipes that require few ingredients and minimal clean-up. Adaptive equipment, kitchen layout, time-saving tips, and special meal preparation methods are included.

Books on Arthritis Self-Management



Title: **The Arthritis Helpbook: A Tested Self-Management Program For Coping with Arthritis and Fibromyalgia, Fifth Edition**

(Available in English and French)

Authors: Kate Lorig and James Fries

Year of Publication: 2000

Approximate Cost: \$30

ISBN: 0-7382-0224-X

Publisher: Perseus Books, Massachusetts

Description: This book is used in the Arthritis Self-Management Program (ASMP). Contents include: understanding the different types of arthritis and fibromyalgia; techniques for reducing pain; maintaining a healthy weight; designing a personal exercise program; finding tips and gadgets for making daily activities easier; communicating with family, friends and doctors; overcoming fatigue and depression. It outlines available arthritis medications and surgery.



Title: **The Arthritis Foundation's Tips for Good Living with Arthritis**

Author: Shelley Peterman Schwarz with the Arthritis Foundation

Year of Publication: 2001

Approximate Cost: \$15

ISBN: 0-912423-27-7

Publisher: The Arthritis Foundation

Description: This book provides information to help people understand arthritis and tips for becoming a good self-manager. Content covers how to live well with arthritis at home, while travelling, in the workplace and during outdoor activities. It also describes devices and techniques to help protect your joints and make your home safe.



Title: **Alternative Treatments for Arthritis: An A to Z Guide to Herbs, Supplements, Bodywork and Other Complementary Treatments for Arthritis**

Author: Dorothy Foltz-Gray

Year of Publication: 2005

Approximate Cost: \$25

ISBN: 0-912423-47-1

Description: This book is a concise, complete guide to the most-frequently used complementary and alternative therapies as well as the scientific research that supports or dispels associated claims or myths. It includes information on herbs, supplements and vitamins; hands-on therapeutic techniques such as Swedish massage; mind-body and meditative treatments; exercise techniques such as tai chi and yoga; and traditional approaches such as Chinese medicine and naturopathy. The description of each therapy includes side effects and safety concerns.



Title: **Aids to Independent Living – Breaking through the Barriers** 🍁
(available in English and French)

Author: Government of Canada, Human Resources Development

Year of Publication: 1994

Approximate Cost: no cost

ISBN: SDPP-013-03-95

Description: This document provides information about aids and devices that can be made at home or purchased inexpensively. Tips and suggestions helpful in the areas of meal preparation, household cleaning, personal care, and recreation are included. This resource is available for viewing at www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/odi/documents/independentLiving/00_toc.shtml&hs=pyp and can be downloaded in text or portable document format. It is also available on audiocassette and in Braille format.

Exercise Books and Videos for Arthritis



Title: **Action Plan for Arthritis**

Author: A. Lynn Miller

Year of Publication: 2003

Approximate Cost: \$30

ISBN: 0-7360-4651-8

Publisher: Human Kinetics

Description: This book is part of the American College of Sports Medicine Series Action Plan for Health and is written by a physiotherapist for people with arthritis and those who work with them. Based on a review of current literature, this book provides detailed information about exercising with arthritis and how to build strength, flexibility and endurance while protecting painful joints. Topics include alternative exercise programs and how to stay on track.



Title: **PACE: People with Arthritis Can Exercise - Level 1 (video)**

Author/Publisher: Arthritis Foundation

Year: 2003

Length: 30 Minutes

ISBN: 0912423323

Arthritis Foundation Item # 835-9010

Description: An exercise program featuring champion golfer Jan Stephenson, this video demonstrates basic exercises that can be safely done by people whose everyday activities are impaired by arthritis. Exercises are aimed at increasing endurance, strengthening muscles and improving flexibility.



Title: PACE: People with Arthritis Can Exercise - Level 2 (video)

Author/Publisher: Arthritis Foundation

Year: 2003

Length: 40 Minutes

ISBN: 0912423366

Arthritis Foundation Item # 835-9020

Description: This video, featuring champion golfer Jan Stephenson, is designed for people with arthritis. It is specifically aimed at people who have mild forms of arthritis, but who become easily fatigued. PACE 2 offers a longer endurance-building segment for an advanced workout.

Facts and Figures About Arthritis



Title: Arthritis in Canada. An Ongoing Challenge 

Editors: Elizabeth Badley and Marie DesMeules

Year of Publication: 2003

ISBN: 0-662-35008-1

Publisher: Health Canada, Ottawa (Cat. #H39-4/14-2203E)

Description: *Arthritis in Canada* is a comprehensive report of the impact of arthritis in Canada using national and provincial health data. Implications for human resources and access to care issues are highlighted.

This document can be accessed on the internet at:

www.arthritis.ca/local/files/pdf%20documents/ArthritisInCanada.pdf or

www.aceu.ca/pdf/Arthritis_in_Canada.pdf

Pamphlets



Call The Arthritis Society at 1-800-321-1433 for pamphlets dealing with topics such as specific types of arthritis, medications, exercise, self-management programs, and community arthritis programs.



For more information on this and other arthritis-related topics, please contact

The Arthritis Society:

Telephone: 1.800.321.1433

Website: www.arthritis.ca

Other Important Numbers

Health Care Team: _____

(Name/phone number) _____

Pharmacy: _____