

MedOnline (/index.php)

Online Doctor MedOnline (<https://medonline.co.nz>)'s guide to MedOnline - treating Arthritis

What is Arthritis ?

Arthritis is a condition which affects your joints, making them stiff, painful and swollen. There are many different kinds of arthritis and they can affect people of any age.

Types of arthritis

The two most common forms of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis affects your joints. All joints have a cartilage, which is like a cushion that protects the end of the bones. With osteoarthritis, the cartilage breaks down so it doesn't cushion the bones properly and in severe cases the bones will grind against each other.

Osteoarthritis progresses slowly and may begin with a minor trauma or repeated injury to a joint. It normally affects feet, knees, lower back, hips and fingers. You are more likely to get osteoarthritis as you get older – it is very common in the over 65 age group.

Rheumatoid arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is much less common than osteoarthritis. It is an autoimmune disease, which means your body's defences against infection (immune system) attack your body's own tissue and this affects the lining of your joints. It is a complex condition that can also cause problems in other parts of your body. Juvenile rheumatoid arthritis affects young people.

If you or a family member has rheumatoid arthritis, you may find that you have times when the disease flares up and causes problems, followed by periods when it is not active. In some people it burns itself out after several years.

Symptoms

The symptoms of both kinds of arthritis are pain, stiffness and swelling in your joints.

Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is most common in the back, knees, hips and fingers. The symptoms will often get worse as the day goes on.

Rheumatoid arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis often affects the smaller joints, including the morning and improve as the day goes on.

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When to see your online doctor MedOnline (/index.php)

Talk to your online doctor if you have symptoms of arthritis, especially if the pain is severe or preventing you from doing normal activities. If your doctor diagnoses rheumatoid arthritis you will usually need to see a specialist to help manage your condition.

Treatment

- If you are overweight, losing weight can help protect your joints from being overworked.
- Physical therapy to keep your joints mobile can be helpful.
- Pain relief medication includes paracetamol and anti-inflammatories.
- Surgery may be needed to repair or replace damaged joints.
- Walking sticks and splints can help if your leg joints are affected.
- Rheumatoid arthritis is often treated with other medicines that stop your immune system from harming your joints. These are called disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs). DMARDs include medicines such as methotrexate or leflunomide and biological medicines such as etanercept or rituximab. Corticosteroids such as prednisone also have a significant role in managing rheumatoid arthritis.

Prevention

- Keeping a healthy weight will reduce the risk of osteoarthritis.
- It is not known what causes rheumatoid arthritis, or how it can be prevented.

Want to talk?

Book an appointment (/book.php) for a video consultation with a qualified New Zealand GP, who can discuss all this with you. If appropriate, we can arrange for the medications to be prescribed and delivered to you.

ONLINE DOCTOR (<https://medonline.co.nz>)

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Cathryn M. on Aug 26, 2020
“On-line GP”

(<https://www.sitejabber.com/reviews/medonline.co.nz>)


★★★★★

Jane B. on Aug 26, 2020
“Great doctor”

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(iPhone app coming soon)

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