

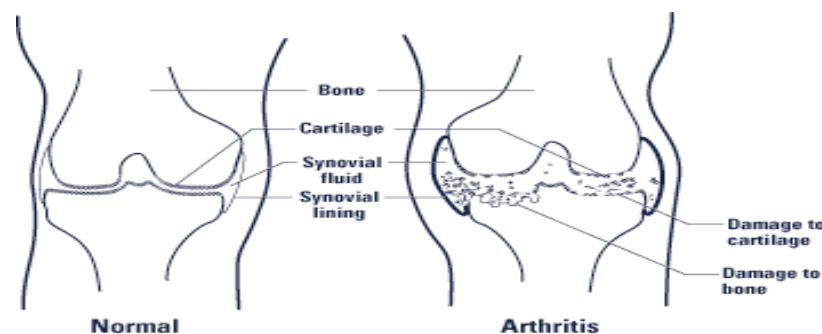
Physiotherapy Newsletter

September – National Arthritis Month

Osteoarthritis is one form of arthritis that generally affects people in their 60's and 70's but can occur in people in their 50's or younger. Osteoarthritis is caused by wear and tear of your joints due to aging, injury, prolonged poor posture, overuse of joints and excessive weight. Symptoms of osteoarthritis include recurring pain and stiffness in the joints, swelling, obvious redness or a feeling of heat and the inability to move a joint. There is no cure for osteoarthritis, however, symptoms can be managed. Please consult with our Physiotherapists regarding treatment strategies.

UNDERSTANDING INFLAMMATION

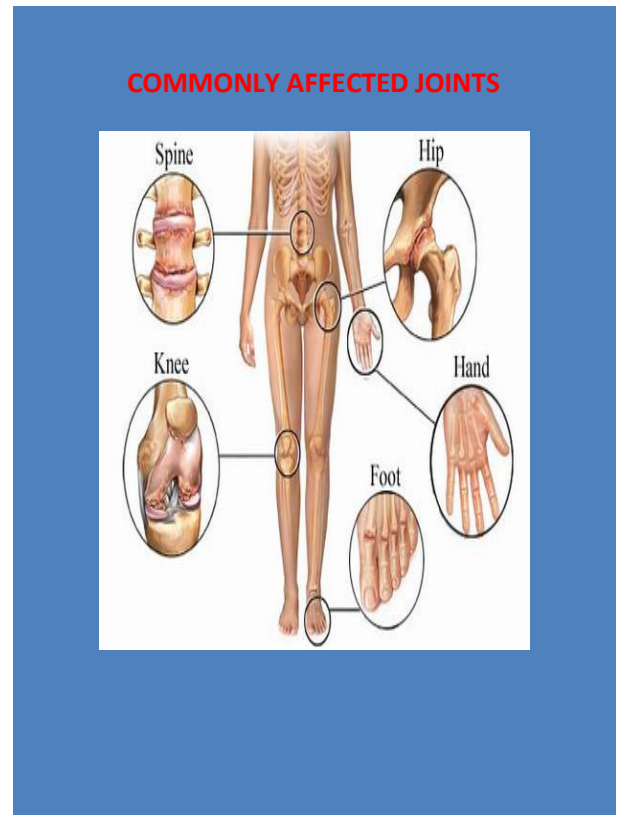
The human body has over 200 bones connected by over 100 joints. Most of these joints are enclosed by a capsule that is strong enough to hold the joint together yet has enough flexibility to allow movement. The inside of the joint capsule has a lining called the synovium which produces a nutrient-rich fluid that works to lubricate the joint. In many forms of arthritis, the synovium thickens and becomes inflamed causing the production of excessive fluid. The extra fluid can cause damage and deterioration of the articular cartilage that lines the bones within the joint. This in turn can cause the bones to grind together causing pain, deformity, and loss of mobility and function.



- 1 in 6 Canadians over the age of 15 is currently living with some form of arthritis
- Nearly 4 million Canadians are affected by arthritis
- The Canadian economy suffers a yearly loss of roughly \$17 billion in healthcare costs and lost workdays
- The two most common forms of arthritis are osteoarthritis (affects 1 in 10 Canadians) and rheumatoid arthritis (affects 1 in 100 Canadians)

Arthritis Management Tips

- ✓ **Exercise** – moderate exercise can help reduce symptoms of arthritis and help strengthen muscles surrounding affected joints.
- ✓ **Heat** – applied to arthritic areas will decrease pain, stiffness and spasm. A hot shower is often beneficial before performing exercises. Do NOT apply heat to an acutely inflamed joint or area.
- ✓ **Cold** – when applied for under 15 minutes, cold will constrict blood flow to the area, reducing inflammation and pain.
- ✓ **Nutrition** – proper nutrition is often critical to maintaining bone and joint integrity. Consult your MD or dietician about a proper nutrition regimen and Arthritis-specific supplements (i.e. glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate) now available in stores.



Occupational Therapists (OTs) work with people who have arthritis to help them maintain their function and participation level in meaningful activities at home, work and play. OTs can help decrease the inflammation caused by arthritis and prevent future joint deformity. Protecting joints is a healthy daily practice that everyone can benefit from whether you have arthritis or not. Joint protection strategies include using proper body mechanics; organizing work areas; changing body position frequently; using light weight appliances, and assistive devices. One quick and easy solution to protect the joints in your hands is to build up the handles of every day hand tools and utensils i.e. knives, forks, spoon and scissors. Foam tubing is ideal for building up handles. Please contact an Occupational Therapist at Limestone Health Consultants to discuss the many ways an Occupational Therapist may assist you.

<http://www.limestonehealth.ca/services-occupationaltherapy.cfm>