

HEALTH EDUCATION  
LIBRARY FOR PEOPLE



World's largest FREE health Education library for people..

We help patients to become better patients! We can help you understand your health and medical problems better so you can get better care in partnership with your Doctor.

#### OUR VISION

We think patients are the largest untapped healthcare resource and that Information therapy is the most Powerful Medicine !

#### OUR GOALS

1. Encouraging health insurance companies to invest in patient education.
2. Advocating information therapy.
3. Setting up a national network of patient education centers.
4. Developing patient educational materials in Indian Languages for the web.



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### **OSTEOARTHRITIS (OA)**

**Also called:**

- (i) Degenerative Joint Disease**
- (ii) Osteoarthrosis**



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**LET'S HELP  
ERADICATE  
IGNORANCE**

## Overview of Osteoarthritis

### Osteoarthritis (OA)



Osteoarthritis (AH-stee-oh-ar-THREYE-tis). Also called: Degenerative joint disease, Osteoarthrosis

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It causes pain, swelling and reduced motion in your joints. It can occur in any joint, but usually it affects your hands, knees, hips or spine.

Osteoarthritis breaks down the cartilage in your joints. Cartilage is the slippery tissue that covers the ends of bones in a joint. Healthy cartilage absorbs the shock of movement. When you lose cartilage, your bones rub together. Over time, this rubbing can permanently damage the joint. Factors that may cause osteoarthritis include

- Being overweight
- Getting older
- Injuring a joint

Therapies that manage osteoarthritis pain and improve function include exercise, weight control, rest, pain relief, alternative therapies and surgery.

#### Diagnosis:

No single test can diagnose osteoarthritis. Most doctors use a combination of the following methods to diagnose the disease and rule out other conditions:

Clinical history, Physical examination, X-rays, Magnetic Resonance Imaging; your doctor may order blood tests to rule out other causes of symptoms. He or she may also order a joint aspiration, which involves drawing fluid from the joint through a needle and examining the fluid under a microscope.

#### Treatment:

Most successful treatment programs involve a combination of treatments lifestyle, and health. Most programs include ways to manage pain and improve function. These can involve exercise, weight control, rest and relief from stress on joints, pain relief techniques, medications, surgery, and complementary and alternative therapies. These approaches are described below.

#### Exercise can help

Daily exercise, such as walking or swimming, helps keep joints moving, lessens pain, and makes muscles around the joints stronger.

#### Other things to do

There are other ways to ease the pain around joints. You might find comfort by using a heating pad or a cold pack, soaking in a warm bath, or swimming in a heated pool.



#### Surgery

Your doctor may suggest surgery when damage to your joints becomes disabling or when other treatments do not help with pain. Surgeons can repair or replace some joints with artificial (man-made) ones.

#### Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS)

TENS is a technique that uses a small electronic device to direct mild electric pulses to nerve endings that lie beneath the skin in the painful area.

#### Medications to control pain

Doctors prescribe medicines to eliminate or reduce pain and to improve functioning. They consider a number of factors when choosing medicines for their patients with osteoarthritis. These include the intensity of pain, potential side effects of the medication, your medical history (other health problems you have or are at risk for), and other medications you are taking.

Recent studies suggest that acupuncture may ease OA pain for some people. Scientists continue to study these kinds of alternative treatments. Always check with your doctor before trying any new treatment for arthritis.

#### Talk to your doctor

Pain and arthritis do not have to be part of growing older. You can work with your doctor to safely lessen the pain and stiffness and to prevent more serious damage to your joints.

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