



## Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. Many of us have it or will develop it in our lifetime. Arthritis is the result of the breakdown of our joints over time. It can be felt in many joints but can be most commonly found in your:

- hands
- Knees
- hips
- neck
- lower back.

Symptoms can include:

- Joints that are painful to touch
- Stiffness
- Aching
- Pain during and after activity
- Grinding feeling when the joint is moved

There is no current cure but symptoms can be relieved in many ways. Before trying any of these approaches consult with your family doctor to ensure they are safe for someone with your health condition.

- **Rest** – Give you joints a break.
- **Reducing repetitive activities**
- **Exercise** – Find a certified personal trainer to introduce you to stress free or stress reduced activities. Try lower impact activities such as cycling, swimming and cross country skiing.
- **Lose weight** – Carrying extra weight can cause undue stress on your joints. If you are overweight, talk to your doctor about changing your lifestyle to find and maintain an ideal weight.
- **Good Nutrition** Healthy fats, like avocado, fish and olive oil help keep your joints lubricated.
- **Hot and cold treatments** – Cold reduces inflammation. Apply a cold pack for 20 minutes out of every hour until the inflammation reduces. Heat helps muscles become supple. Apply a warm (not hot) compress for 20 minutes out of every hour to relieve tense muscles and relax joints.
- **Topical pain creams**
- **Over the counter pain relievers and anti-inflammatories**
- **Prescription medications**
- **Hyaluronic acid or Corticosteroid injections**
- **Support groups** – There are many support groups popping up around your province. Chronic illness can cause emotional stress. Connect with others that understand your situation.
- **Physiotherapy**
- **Occupational Therapy** – Occupational therapists can assist you in learning new ways to do everyday activities that will reduce the stress on your joints.
- **Educate Yourself** – Knowing more about what you can do to help yourself is empowering. Find a class in Arthritis management. Ask your family doctor to refer you to OASIS
- **Supplements** – Glucosamine and Chondroitin (there is no conclusive evidence that these are effective).