



Patient Information

Managing Osteoarthritis Pain

Osteoarthritis, one of the most common forms of arthritis, is often described as a “wear-and-tear” disease. That’s because it slowly breaks down joint cartilage, which cushions the ends of bones so that joints can move easily.

When cartilage breaks down, bones rub against each other. This causes stiffness, pain and loss of movement. Osteoarthritis is most common in the knees, hips, fingers, neck and lower back. It affects more than 20 million people in the United States and is the leading cause of disability among older adults.

Because osteoarthritis cannot be cured, it’s important to get a proper diagnosis and begin early and aggressive treatment. Your nurse practitioner may use four tools to make the diagnosis: your medical history, a physical examination, x-rays and joint aspiration (draining fluid from the joint).

Who Gets It and Why

Osteoarthritis is more common in women than men. Most people develop osteoarthritis after age 45. The exact cause of osteoarthritis isn’t known, but risk factors include the following:

- aging
- excess weight
- injury or overuse
- genetics
- a traumatic joint injury
- poor intake of natural anti-inflammatory compounds such as some flavonoids, antioxidants and essential fatty acids.

Symptoms

Osteoarthritis usually develops gradually. In some patients, the soreness or stiffness that develops early in the disease may never worsen. In others, osteoarthritis will progress to interfere with daily activities such as walking or sleeping.

These are common signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis:

- morning joint stiffness
- stiffness or pain after periods of rest

- joint soreness after overuse or inactivity
- worsening coordination, posture and walking because of pain and stiffness
- cracking or grinding noise or sensation in a joint.

Why You Need Nutrients

The body relies on nutrient intake to help maintain joint health. When the body doesn’t have enough nutrients (or when joint injury or trauma occurs), a conversion process produces arachidonic acid in joint tissue. When joints produce too much arachidonic acid, two enzymes, cyclooxygenase and lipoxygenase, convert the excess acid into inflammatory chemical irritants called prostaglandins and leukotrienes. These substances damage joints and cause other imbalances in the body. Conversely, providing your body with quality nourishment can deliver nutrients to your cartilage, remove waste products and repair and rebuild your cartilage.

Treatment Options

Any treatment plan for osteoarthritis should attempt to control pain and other symptoms. It should also attempt to improve your ability to function in everyday activities and to slow progression of the disease. Treatment plans may include the following:

- exercise (can reduce pain and improve movement)
- weight control (eases pressure on weight-bearing joints)
- joint protection (take breaks and use assistive devices)
- physical and occupational therapy (strengthens muscles, improves flexibility, helps with daily activity)
- medication (over-the-counter and prescription medications can relieve or minimize pain and slow disease progress)
- medical nutrition — Limbrel, available by prescription to meet distinctive nutritional requirements of people with osteoarthritis, contains a blend of natural ingredients from phytochemical food source materials. This blend is called flavocoxid, and it controls excess production of arachidonic acid.
- surgery (for extreme cases of osteoarthritis). ❖

More information about Limbrel for osteoarthritis is available at www.limbrel.com.

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Additional Notes:
