



for your best health

ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT

Ask Your Pharmacist

When many people hear the word "arthritis," they might see a mental picture of an older lady, groaning about her creaking, painful joints. In reality, arthritis has many faces, which include the athlete, the business executive in his mid-thirties, and the young woman in her upper twenties. Most people don't understand the prevalence or impact of bone and joint disorders, which include arthritis and osteoporosis, among many others.

One out of every 3 adults suffers from some form of arthritis. Arthritis is second only to heart disease as a cause of work disability. Osteoporosis affects 44 million Americans, 68% of whom are women. More than 7 million Americans suffer debilitating effects from arthritis, including decreased work productivity, limited walking abilities and even difficulty dressing and bathing.

Arthritis is medically defined as any inflammatory condition of the joints, and actually exists in several forms that are completely unrelated. As such, they cannot be approached or treated in the same way. Each form requires distinct treatment, specific for that particular type.

The most common type, called osteoarthritis, is usually what most people mean when they use the term "arthritis." Defined as a breakdown of cartilage in the joints, osteoarthritis leads to stiffness, joint pain, and possible loss of joint function. Overuse of the joint, age, injury, infection, or certain types of bone disorders can cause this most common joint disorder.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease in which the body's white blood cells attack the tissues that cushion joints. This leads to significant pain, stiffness, and eventual deterioration of the joint.

Gout is a metabolic disorder, in which a chemical, uric acid, crystallizes and accumulates in the joints causing inflammation, intense pain, swelling, and possible deformation. While the kidneys normally remove uric acid from the blood, uric acid levels

may become so high that the kidneys cannot remove it all, resulting in gout.

Options for arthritis pain management?

If you suffer from arthritis, you already know that what works for one person may not work for you. We all react differently to pain, so it should be no surprise that different people need different arthritis treatments. Let's look briefly at some arthritis treatment categories.

Drugs. Patients may choose to lessen joint pain with over-the-counter and prescription pain relievers, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), and anti-inflammatory drugs such as NSAIDS (ibuprofen, Aleve, Celebrex, aspirin). Corticosteroids (Prednisone, Dexamethasone) may also be helpful, but could bring harmful side effects like increased gastrointestinal disturbances.

Nutritional Supplements and Herbs. Certain nutritional supplements, such as glucosamine and chondroitin, may help to rebuild cartilage. Anti-inflammatory herbal supplements may also be helpful for relieving arthritis pain and swelling, but some nutrients and herbs may cause dangerous interactions if used incorrectly. Be sure to visit with a natural pharmacist before supplementing. Contact our pharmacist today for an evaluation that will maximize and personalize your arthritis treatment options.

Glucosamine and chondroitin may actually assist our bodies in restoring cartilage around the joints. Studies have shown that arthritis patients who use glucosamine or chondroitin experience pain relief similar to that of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like aspirin and ibuprofen. According to the FDA, the only notable side effects of glucosamine and chondroitin supplements include intestinal gas and/or softened stools, which may often be alleviated by changing brands or lowering the dosage.

Like all chemicals, glucosamine and chondroitin interact with your body and other drugs. People with certain health conditions like diabetes may need to take extra precautions when using glucosamine. Blood thinning medications like

Visit our pharmacy or website to learn more about Managing Arthritis.

ARTHRITIS MANAGEMENT (continued)

heparin may also interact dangerously with chondroitin.

Before choosing a glucosamine and/or chondroitin supplement, please make an appointment with our pharmacist for a comprehensive evaluation of your medications and supplements. Contact our pharmacist today if you want to begin supplementation with glucosamine or chondroitin. Our pharmacy will help you choose a supplement safely.

WHICH OTHER SUPPLEMENTS MAY BE HELPFUL FOR ARTHRITIS?

There are other nutritional supplements that may be beneficial for reducing the breakdown of cartilage and promoting overall joint health. SAME (S-adenosylmethionine), originally studied for use in depression,

When many people hear the word "arthritis," they might see a mental picture of an older lady, groaning about her creaking, painful joints. In reality, arthritis has many faces, which include the athlete, the business executive in his mid-thirties, and the young woman in her upper twenties. Most people don't understand the prevalence or impact of bone and joint disorders, which include arthritis and osteoporosis, among many others.

may help to improve pain management and provide long-term joint protection. Herbs like boswellia and turmeric have anti-inflammatory properties that may help to reduce arthritis pain.

Let's take a look at some other supplemental recommendations for arthritis.

Vitamins, Minerals, and Trace Elements - all are important, especially vitamin C, niacinamide, beta carotene, boron, and manganese

Enzymes - bromelain

Amino Acids - phenylalanine

Essential Fatty Acids - omega-3 and omega-6, especially fish oils

Antioxidants - vitamin E, selenium, and grape seed extract

Herbs and Phytonutrients - boswellia, turmeric, devil's claw, yucca, horsetail, white willow, SAM-e, and cayenne

You should always consult with your pharmacist before self-supplementing, especially if you are taking other medications. Bromelain, for example, may increase effects of blood-thinning drugs and tetracycline antibiotics. Contact our pharmacist today for guidance in choosing the best supplement, and advice on how to prevent dangerous interactions.

Research has continually shown that regular exercise improves arthritis by strengthening muscles around the joints, thereby providing better support for those joints. Let's look at several other

non-drug ways to improve arthritis pain and reduce the risk of injury, as suggested by the Arthritis Foundation.

Maintain your ideal body weight.

Use the big joints. Lift with your legs, and carry groceries with your whole upper torso instead of just one hand, for example.

Pace yourself. Rest frequently during exercise or other strenuous activities.

Don't overdo new activities. Start new activities slowly and safely to reduce injury risk.

Ask for help.

Contact our pharmacist today for more information about how supplements and other non-drug therapies can help to improve your arthritis pain.