

Skeltons Chemists

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Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday - 8.30am - 3pm

Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for October 2024

1. How many people have arthritis in the UK?
2. What is arthritis?
3. When should you speak to your GP?
4. Is there a cure?
5. What are the common treatments?
6. What can you do to protect your joints?
7. How can I make things easier around the home?
8. What should I eat to help my arthritis?
9. Why is exercise important for people with arthritis?
10. Where do I find exercises that will help me?



Answers on the bottom of P2

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What is arthritis?

Arthritis is a common condition that causes pain and inflammation. In the UK more than 10 million people have arthritis or other similar conditions that affect their joints.

Osteoarthritis is the most common type in the UK. It often develops in people in their mid-40s and is more common in women and people with a family history of the condition.

Osteoarthritis initially affects the smooth cartilage lining of the joint. This makes movement more difficult than usual, leading to pain and stiffness.

Once the cartilage lining starts to roughen and thin out, the tendons and ligaments have to work harder. This can cause swelling and the formation of bony spurs called osteophytes. Severe loss of cartilage can lead to bone rubbing on bone, altering the shape of the joint and forcing the bones out of their normal position.

You should speak to your GP if you have:

- Joint pain
- Tenderness in the joints
- Stiffness in the joints
- Inflammation in and around the joints
- Restricted movement in the joints
- Warm red skin on your joints
- Weakness and muscle wasting



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How do you treat arthritis?

There is no cure for arthritis but there are many treatments that can help slow it down. Some common treatments include:

- ◆ Pain killers
- ◆ Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- ◆ Corticosteroids
- ◆ Disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs)
- ◆ Physiotherapy
- ◆ Exercise

If you have arthritis, it's important to look after your joints to avoid further damage. For example, try to reduce the stress on your joints while carrying out everyday tasks like moving and lifting. To help protect your joints:

- ⇒ Use larger stronger joints as levers - for example take the pressure of opening a heavy door on your shoulder rather than on your hand
- ⇒ Use several joints to spread the weight of an object - for example use both hands to carry your shopping or distribute the weight evenly by using a rucksack
- ⇒ Don't grip too tightly - grip as loosely as possible or use a padded handle to widen your grip.

At home you may find that carrying out tasks can be a challenge but practical tips that could help include:

- * Keeping things in easy reach
- * Using a handrail to help you get up and down stairs
- * Using long handled tools to pick things up or to clean
- * Fitting levers to taps to make them easier to turn
- * Using electric kitchen equipment, such as tin openers, when preparing food.



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Healthy eating and exercise

It is very important to eat a healthy, balanced diet if you have arthritis. Eating healthily will give you all the nutrients you need and help you maintain a healthy weight. Your diet should consist of a variety of foods from all 5 food

groups. These are:

- ◇ Fruit and vegetables
- ◇ Starchy food – such as bread and pasta
- ◇ Meat, eggs and beans
- ◇ Milk and dairy foods
- ◇ Foods containing fat and sugar

If you are overweight, losing weight can really help you cope with arthritis. Too much weight places excess pressure on the joints in your hips, knees, ankles and feet leading to increased pain and mobility problems.

If your arthritis is painful, you may not feel like exercising. However, being active can reduce and prevent pain. Regular exercise can also:

- ▶ Improve your movement and joint mobility
- ▶ Increase muscle strength
- ▶ Reduce stiffness
- ▶ Boost energy.

As long as you do the right type and level of exercise for your condition, your arthritis won't get any worse. Combined with a healthy, balanced diet, regular exercise will help you lose weight and place less strain on your joints. Your GP can recommend the type and level of exercise that's right for you. If you are looking for exercise that can help your arthritis visit www.versusarthritis.org. and search exercise.

For more information on this or any other minor health problem, you may have, chat to one of our trained team.

Answers: Q1, More than 10 million. Q2, It is a general term for conditions that cause joint pain, swelling and stiffness. Q3, If you have joint pain, tenderness, stiffness, inflammation, restricted movements and/or warm red skin on your joints, weakness and muscle wasting. Q4, No. Q5, Painkillers, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), corticosteroids, disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), physiotherapy, regular exercise and in severe cases - surgery. Q6, Use larger joints as levers, use several joints to spread the weight of an object, avoid gripping too tightly, try to avoid sitting in the same position for long periods of time. Q7, Keep things in easy reach, use a handrail to go up and down the stairs, use long handled tools to pick things up or clean, fit levers to taps to make them easier to turn, use electrical kitchen equipment like tin openers when preparing food. Q8, A variety of food from all 5 food groups. Q9, Staying as active as possible can reduce your pain and help you stay independent. Q10, "Versus Arthritis" - a charity that helps people with arthritis.