

Osteoarthritis Notes

Teacher Notes

What is arthritis?

The word arthritis means inflammation of the joint.

What is inflammation?

Inflammation is a medical word describing pain, stiffness, redness and swelling.

What is a joint?

A joint is where two bones fit together. Knees, ankles, hips, shoulders, elbows, wrists, are all joints. Fingers and toes also have joints.

Arthritis is a disease that can involve any of the joints in the body, often occurring in the hip, knee, spine or other weight-bearing joints, but can also affect the fingers and other non-weight-bearing joints.

Symptoms of arthritis include joint pain, swelling, stiffness and fatigue. Untreated inflammation can eventually lead to joint damage, destruction and disability. Some forms of arthritis can also affect the body's internal organs.

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. 1 out of 10 Canadians are affected with osteoarthritis. This is sometimes a part of aging. Osteoarthritis wears down cartilage, the material that cushions the ends of bones.

Though once referred to as the "wear-and-tear" arthritis, the Osteoarthritis Research Society International (OARSI) recently re-defined this condition. It describes OA as the result of the body's failed attempt to repair damaged joint tissues. However, OA isn't always developed due to abnormal stresses or injury; it may also occur as part of the normal aging process. This condition leads to the breakdown of cartilage (the tough elastic material that covers and protects the ends of bones) and the underlying bone, resulting in pain, stiffness, swelling and bone-on-bone reduction in range of movement in the affected joint.

Osteoarthritis Notes

The cause of OA is complex and can be a combination of factors such as age, obesity, gender, occupation (injury as a result of a physical job), participation in certain sports, history of joint injury or surgery and genetics.

The symptoms of osteoarthritis can include some or all of the following:

- Pain in or around a joint
- Stiffness or problems in moving a joint
- Swelling sometimes in a joint

Many people do not have any symptoms in the early stages of the disease. It often can take a long time for the disease to progress and the disease can remain stable for long periods of time.

Risk Factors:

Aging

Excess Weight

Injuries

Heredity

Lack of Physical Activity

Preventing Osteoarthritis

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Keep a healthy weight

Protect your joints by avoiding excess stress in daily life

Osteoarthritis Notes

Weight loss of 11 pounds can halve a woman's risk of developing knee osteoarthritis.

Taking part in moderate physical activity 3 times or more per week can reduce the risk of arthritis-related disability by 47% in older adults with knee osteoarthritis.