

What is arthritis?

Arthritis is a common degenerative condition marked by joint inflammation causing severe back, neck, shoulder, hip or knee pain. Arthritis affects over 50 million of Americans and it is the leading cause of disability in this country.

Symptoms:

Common arthritis symptoms include swelling, pain, stiffness and decreased range of motion. Symptoms may come and go and pain can be mild, moderate or severe. They may stay about the same for years, but may progress or get worse over time.

Severe arthritis can result in chronic pain, inability to do daily activities and make it difficult to walk or climb stairs. Arthritis can cause permanent joint changes. These changes may be visible, such as knobby finger joints, but often the damage can only be seen on X-ray. Some types of arthritis also affect the heart, eyes, lungs, kidneys and skin as well as the joints.

Osteoarthritis

There are different types of arthritis but Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. When the cartilage – the slick, cushioning surface on the ends of bones – wears away, bone rubs against bone, causing pain, swelling and stiffness. Over time, joints can lose strength and pain may become chronic. Risk factors include excess weight, family history, age, smoking, unhealthy life style and previous injury (meniscus or ligament tear, for example).

Prevention:

Osteoarthritis may be prevented by staying active, maintaining a healthy life style, and avoiding injury and repetitive movements.

Treatments:

Arthritis pain can be managed by:

- Physical therapy
- Medication
- Regular physical activity
- Maintaining a healthy weight and life style
- Cortison injection
- Synvisc (rooster comb) injection
- Bone marrow derived stem cell injection

If arthritis is advanced and joint is in a bone on bone condition and symptoms are severe joint replacement may be necessary.