

Non-Surgical Options for Arthritis

What is Arthritis?

Arthritis is a collection of conditions affecting joints and other tissues. It can cause pain, restrict mobility and diminish quality of life. Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common type of arthritis and is caused by the breakdown of cartilage in the joints. When the cartilage in a joint begins to break down it may result in swelling, pain and stiffness in the joint.

Non-Pharmacological Treatment

- ☐ **Exercise and Activity Modification**
 Experts recommend 150 minutes of activity per week including strength, flexibility, aerobic and balance exercises. That is just 20 minutes per day! Regular physical activity can reduce the pain and stiffness caused by your arthritis. Even small amounts of activity is good. Choose activities you enjoy and avoid those that are aggravating.

- ☐ **Weight Control**
 Losing weight can improve your symptoms. It is estimated that every pound we carry on our body creates 3-4 pounds of pressure on our hips and knees. Even a small reduction in our body weight, such as 5-10%, can be beneficial. Discuss medication, diet, and/or surgical options with your doctor.

- ☐ **Pool Exercises / Classes**
 Exercise in warm water pools

- ☐ **Gait Aids**
 Cane / Walker / Rollator / Walking Poles / Other:

- ☐ **Bracing**
 Unloader / Sleeve / Other:

- ☐ **Heat and Ice**
 Protect your skin from prolonged exposure to ice or heat (15 minutes max)

Pharmacological Treatment

- ☐ **Intra-articular Treatment (Injection)**
 • Discuss options with your doctor
- ☐ **Oral Medications:**
 • Discuss options with your doctor
- ☐ **Topical Medications:**
 • Discuss options with your doctor

Referrals / Services

- ☐ **Sports Medicine Physician**
- ☐ **Rheumatologist**
- ☐ **Arthritis Society**
- ☐ **Physiotherapy**
- ☐ **Arthritis-friendly exercise and Activity classes**

See handouts

