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Osteoarthritis

What is osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis (OA) or Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD) is a painful joint disease in which the cushioning cartilage layer between two bones wears away. As the disease progresses it becomes more painful and debilitating.

Symptoms of OA:

- Bony joint enlargement
- Morning stiffness that “warms up” with use
- Crepitus- “creaky” feeling when the joint is moved
- Bony tenderness along the joint



What causes OA?

OA was originally thought to be caused by wear and tear that led to the wearing away of the intraarticular (within the joint) cartilage. People with certain knee injuries are more likely to develop OA, as are those who are very overweight. Many people develop OA as they get older and we don't know exactly why.

Does OA only affect knees?

No, OA can affect almost any joint but is most common in weight bearing joints- knees, hips, low back, neck, and hands are frequently involved.

Is there a cure for OA?

There is no cure for OA but there are treatments available to relief symptoms and ultimately surgery is available replace joints that no longer function.

What are the treatments for OA?

- Non-pharmacologic treatments: rest and icing the affected joint provide some relief.
- Aspirin, acetaminophen, naproxen, and ibuprofen are all available over-the-counter and provide pain relief.
- Intra-articular Injections- Injection of corticosteroids or hyaluronic acid help many patients postpone surgery when other pain relief is no longer effective.
- Arthroplasty- Joint replacement surgery

Where can I learn more?

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/osteoarthritis/DS00019>

http://www.uptodate.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~77ll0j9jfS9fuD&selectedTitle=2%7E150&source=search_result