

Dealing With Arthritis

One of the most common health conditions that affects seniors is arthritis.

There are several types of arthritis that can affect seniors, but the most common type of arthritis is degenerative arthritis. This type of arthritis is known as “wear and tear” arthritis.

Arthritis is technically described as inflammation of a joint. Degenerative arthritis can affect any joint in the body but is most likely to occur in the neck, lower back, hips and knees. Most degenerative arthritis is a result of abnormal pressure on a joint over the course of many years. This abnormal pressure can be a result of past injuries, but is most commonly a result of abnormal biomechanics of the joint, related to abnormal posture.

Arthritic changes are most commonly diagnosed on x-ray. The x-ray will show changes to the joint including: bone spurs, loss of disc height and changes in the structure of the bone. What the x-rays don’t show is the inflammation associated with the degenerative change and the inflammation is what actually causes the pain. Many people have these changes in their joints but don’t have a tremendous amount of pain, whereas other people have very little physical change but have a lot of pain. The problem is the inflammation and lack of movement of the joint, not the structural change.

Many times, seniors are told that their pain is a result of arthritis, but are often told that there is nothing to do about it. This is totally incorrect. Research has shown that there are multiple ways to improve the motion of an arthritic joint as well as reduce the inflammation that causes the pain. Degenerative arthritis can’t be reversed but the process can be slowed or stopped.

The first thing that needs to be done to slow the arthritic process is to restore as much of the normal movement of the joint. This can be accomplished with chiropractic adjustments to the joint along with range of motion exercises. The process can take 8-10 weeks with daily exercises and a series of corrective adjustments to the joint.

The second thing that needs to be accomplished is to correct any biomechanical changes of posture that has caused the abnormal pressure on the joint. Most arthritic joints will have muscle changes around the joint, whereas some muscles get too tight and others get weak. Stretches and exercises will correct this pressure, thus resulting in restoring normal joint pressure and slow the arthritic process.

The third thing that can help with arthritis is to correct any nutritional deficiencies that lead to the breakdown of the joint and help normal tissue health. Research has shown that people who drink adequate amounts of water and take omega 3 fatty acid supplements have less affects from arthritis, leading to better range of motion and less pain.

If you suffer from arthritis, don’t accept the theory that nothing can be done to help the condition. Have a complete evaluation of your arthritis from a chiropractic physician that fully evaluates all factors of the condition and is willing to instruct you in proper use of stretches, exercises and nutritional concerns.

Article submitted by Sean Wahl, DC of Barnesville Chiropractic



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