

# Vantage Pharmacy

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## Opening Times

Monday - Friday 8.30am to 7pm

Saturday, and Sunday Closed

Bank Holidays Closed

## Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for July 2021

1. How many people have osteoarthritis in the UK?
2. What is it?
3. What causes arthritis?
4. What are the most commonly affected joints?
5. What can I do to help my arthritis?
6. What are the symptoms of arthritis?
7. Why does exercise help?
8. Can osteoarthritis be caused by too much exercise?
9. How do I deal with the pain?
10. What do I do when I feel exhausted?



Answers on the bottom of page two

### Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis and can cause your joints to feel stiff and painful. Nearly 9 million people in the UK suffer from it. Older people, especially women, are more likely to be affected. It used to be thought that it was caused by wear and tear and therefore inevitable as we got older. We now know it is more complicated. Inside your joints there is a loss of cartilage, which surrounds the ends of your bones and acts as a shock absorber and the formation of new bone can cause the joints to look lumpy or become bent. No one knows exactly what causes OA, but it may be due to repeated small injuries that happen as part of daily life that



don't heal completely. It can run in families and broken bones or sporting injuries can lead to OA later in life.

### Symptoms

There are different types of arthritis and the symptoms you experience will vary depending on the type you have which is why it's important to get an accurate diagnosis if you have:

- Joint pain, tenderness and stiffness
  - Inflammation in and around your joints
  - Restricted movement of the joints
  - Warm red skin over the affected joint
  - Weakness and muscle wasting
- The most common joints to be affected are the hands, spine, knees and hips.

## Ways to help with OA.

Losing weight can really help. For every pound you are above a healthy weight, an extra 4-5 pounds of weight goes through your hips, knees and feet which places excessive pressure on those joints leading to increased pain and mobility problems. Exercise, even if you may not feel like it, can reduce and prevent pain. OA is not caused by too much exercise or hard work. It will improve your range of movement and joint mobility, increase your muscle strength, reduce stiffness and boost your energy. As long as you do the right type and level of exercise for your condition, your arthritis will not get any worse. Taking care of your joints is also important to avoid further damage. For example try to protect your joints by:

- Using larger stronger joints as levers e.g. taking the pressure of opening a heavy door on your shoulder rather than your hand
- Use several joints to spread the weight of an object e.g. use both hands to carry your shopping or distribute the weight evenly using a ruck sack
- Don't grip too tightly – grip as loosely as possible or use a padded handle to widen your grip.

## Managing Pain

If you suffer from OA, you may experience both acute and chronic pain. There is no one way to manage this pain. You could be prescribed medicines and may eventually have surgery but lifestyle, as mentioned above also plays an important factor:

- Do more exercise - this releases endorphins which will help to lift your mood.



- Relax and learn to meditate - arthritis can cause your muscles to become tense and therefore more painful. Relaxation releases muscle tension throughout your body.
  - Control your breathing - when you are in pain, you tend to breathe shallowly. Breathing deeply will help you “go with the pain” and be more in control which lessens the fear of pain.
  - Improve your sleep pattern - lack of sleep can increase your stress levels and inflammatory hormones which makes pain worse. So, practise meditation, avoid napping, develop a sleep ritual and avoid stimulating drinks in the evening.
- Try a clinical treatment like physiotherapy.
- Set yourself goals each day, as it is a good way of focusing on something positive rather than thinking about your arthritis.
- Medication - discuss options with your GP.
- Pace your activities - there are times when you feel exhausted. To manage these times, it is important not to overdo things. Prioritise your activities, plan your week so you have times of rest and adapt your way of working like breaking tasks into smaller chunks.

**For more information about this or any health related problem, call us to talk to one of our trained team.**



Answers: Q1, Nearly 9 million. Q2, It is a pain and stiffness affecting your joints. Q3, A loss of cartilage which surrounds the ends of your bones that act as a buffer. Q4, Hands, spine, knees and hips. Q5, Maintain a healthy weight, do exercise, look after your joints. Q6, Joint pain, inflammation in and around your joints, restricted movement of your joints, warm skin over the affected joint, weakness and muscle wasting. Q7, It improves your range of movement and joint mobility, increases your muscle strength, reduces stiffness and boosts your energy. Q8, Only if the joint has been damaged. Q9, Do more exercise, relax, meditate, control your breathing, improve your sleep pattern, take medication. Q10, Pace yourself, prioritise your activities, break tasks into smaller chunks.