

Could **ARTHRITIS** be what is causing my **Pain?**



**INFORMATION FOR
PEOPLE WITH
JOINT PAIN**

Presented by:



National AgrAbility Project/Breaking New Ground Resource Center
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Arthritis Foundation, Heartland Region, Indiana Chapter
Arthritis Foundation, Pacific Region, California Chapters



Transition Resources
Corporation



Western Center for
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Rosa, how many more tomatoes do you think we need?

We probably have about enough, Sara. I hope so, my hands hurt!



What's wrong with your hands?

Well, they hurt in the mornings when I get up, and they hurt when I do the same thing over and over.



It might be arthritis. I heard about it at the health fair the other day.

I think my mother had arthritis. What exactly is it?

It is when the cartilage cushion between your bones wears out. Then bones rub against each other causing pain and swelling.

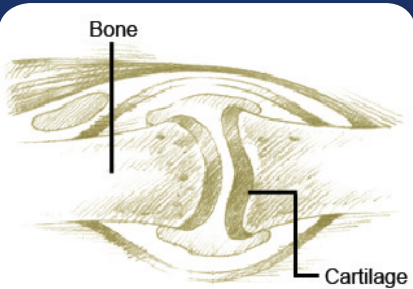


My mother's hands became deformed. I hope mine don't get that way.

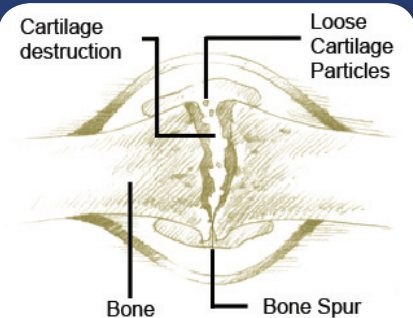


Not necessarily. There are many different kinds of arthritis, but two main ones. Osteoarthritis may come as we get older.

This pamphlet says it is the "pain and/or inflammation of joints". It can cause swelling or redness, pain, and even loss of movement.



Normal Joint



Joint with Osteoarthritis



Since I'm older, is that causing my pain?

Maybe. But not all cases are due to age. Osteoarthritis can be caused by injuries, doing the same tasks over and over, or other things.



Ay! I think of all of the hoeing, picking, and weeding I've done every day for years!



The other type is rheumatoid arthritis. This affects the entire body and can cause deformity of joints and make you feel tired or ill all over.



That sounds like Mama! Papa never had a problem.

This brochure also says that women are more likely to have rheumatoid arthritis than men.



My back aches when I'm bent over all day in the fields picking vegetables or working at the sorting and packing tables.



Sara, this booklet has ideas to help you. For instance, if you are bent over all day, use your knees to bend down—not your back, especially when lifting.



Stretching and changing position can reduce pain. You should use tools with long handles so you're not bending over.

This way you will also take care of your hands.

Those are good ideas! I've noticed that when I run warm water over my hands, it helps too.



At the health fair, an AgrAbility representative spoke about ways to work and avoid the pain of bending over and lifting.



Yes, I think warm treatments help relieve pain and swelling too.



Sara, have you tried a heating pad or an ice pack on your back?



If you think you have some type of arthritis, it is best to ask your doctor. Ask about "anti-inflammatory" medicines too. They can really help with the pain.





Ahh, sweetie, I cannot hold you right now. My knees just aren't what they used to be.



What? The knees again?



My back too! I am getting old, and working at the dairy for 20 years has taken its toll.

If you are having pains in your joints, it could be arthritis. We were just talking about it in the kitchen.



Maybe it's time to see a doctor. You don't want to keep living with that pain, do you?





I don't really want to go.

I learned that many people don't pay attention to their pain because they think that is normal due to age.



But what they don't know is that pain can be prevented if one receives treatment.




Rosa's calling the clinic tomorrow—she can make an appointment for you too.




Well, okay, the pain is only getting worse and slows me down at work. Some days, I don't even want to get out of bed.

Days later at the Dr's office/clinic




Good morning, Mr. Sanchez. How long have you had pain in your knees and back?

Well, it's been a few years, but it's worse lately. I think I'm just getting old.




But my family said it might be arthritis.


Yes, it may be arthritis.




Based on your medical records, we will do some tests to be sure. First we will take an X-ray of your knees and back,




Then we will do a blood test. You may feel a pin prick but it should not cause pain.



What does my blood have to do with arthritis in my knees and back?



It will show if your body is fighting inflammation or infection. These tests help show if you have arthritis.



Then we can compare results later to see if there are changes.

Days later...

Mr. Sanchez,
your tests show you
have arthritis in your
knees.



So does that mean I have
to quit my job? My family
needs my income.



No, there
are simple things you can do to
make work easier, like reducing
the stress and pain on your joints,
and reducing pain and prevent
further injury.



That's a relief!
So what can I do?





Alternate between using something hot and cold. For example, use warm washcloths or a heating pad, for 15 minutes. Then use a bag with ice for 15 minutes to help with the pain.



You can substitute the ice pack for a bag of frozen vegetables. Do this for several days until the swelling is gone.



Also you can try a pain reliever available without a prescription at the store or pharmacy, like ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin.

Take them even after you feel better to get rid of swelling. Always follow the instructions on the bottle, and let us know if you have any problems while taking medicine.



If your work causes arthritis to "flare up," let your boss know and get extra rest and sit whenever possible.




Too much can hurt you, so always take the correct amount.



Cloth braces or wraps support your sore joints during flare-ups. Get them at a store or pharmacy.






*Maintain a good diet
and a healthy weight.
Extra pounds put stress
on your joints.*



*These should help you,
Angelo, but pain and stiffness
comes and goes, so follow through
with these things even when you
are feeling better.*



*What can I do at the
dairy to help me work
with less pain?*

Take frequent breaks and switch tasks as much as possible when doing the same motion over and over, like attaching milking equipment.




If you stand for a long time, use a rubber mat to stand on. Wear shoes and boots that give good support.




Here are some exercises to make your leg muscles stronger that will help your knees.







To lift objects, keep them close to your body... bend your knees not your back.




My grandmother made a special tea to help the pain in her hands, and she also wore a copper bracelet. A work friend uses magnets to cure arthritis.



Always check with a health professional about the treatments you want to use.



Many swear by these unproven "arthritis cures," but there is no proof they help.



I am glad there are things I can do and it is not just that I'm getting old! I cannot stop working!

Several weeks later...



Come here
sweetie, come!



It's so nice to see
Angelo up and moving again!
Thanks to Marcela who
encouraged him to go to
the doctor.

I'm glad he is feeling
better. Do his knees
still hurt?

Sometimes, but they are
much better now that he is doing
strengthening exercises, using
hot and cold treatments, trying
the medicines, and adjusting his
work practices.



Oh, my baby girl!!



It looks like his
exercises have helped
him get better!

FIN

Sources of Information

Contact the Arthritis Foundation to ask for a free copy of our materials available in Spanish.



- *Arthritis Foundation en Español*
www.arthritis.org/espanol
(800) 283-7800
ayuda@arthritis.org
- *National AgrAbility Project*
www.agrability.org
- *CalAgrAbility, the California AgrAbility Project*
<http://calagrability.ucdavis.edu/>
(800) 477-6129
- *National Center for Farmworker Health*
(800) 531-5120

The Arthritis Foundation has more than 150 local offices in the US. To find an office near you, call:
1-800-283-7800

Tips to Control Arthritis



1. Avoid gripping objects tightly for very long. It stresses joints.
2. Use handles with padding. To add padding wrap them with foam rubber and duck tape.
3. Avoid short-handled tools that require you to bend or stoop.
4. Lift/carry objects safely. Bend knees... use both arms to grasp object close to the body, push up with legs.
5. Use steps. Never jump down from trucks or other equipment.
6. Ice joints. Carry a bag of frozen vegetables, fruit or ice in lunch cooler to ice joints.
7. Eat healthy. Weight causes pain and stress to your joints (1lb of overweight puts 3-5lbs of stress on the joints).
8. Try to sit while working to reduce weight on joints.
9. Combine similar tasks, i.e., when repairing several items, do all repairs at the same time.
10. Change positions frequently... from bending, standing, stooping, sitting.
11. Alternate between heavy and light jobs BUT do not stay in one position for too long.



The AgrAbility Program in our state helped us to continue working in agriculture.

In addition to information about arthritis, they helped our family with other problems and injuries. Contact your AgrAbility Program today!

12. Wear shoes that fit well, give good traction (that don't slip), and have padding to support your feet/joints.

Do you have a disability that affects how you do your job? AgrAbility is a program for farmworkers and farmers.

There are AgrAbility programs in more than 20 states. To find one near you call AgrAbility at 1-800-477-6129 or visit www.agrability.org/contact-list

Keys to keeping yourself healthy

- Pain...see a doctor
- Eat healthy foods...avoid too much fat, sugar, sodium and alcohol
- Medications...read labels, use only as directed, do not mix, know side effects and warnings
- Work...take breaks, use lightweight tools with long, large handles, use carts, dollies
- Arthritis...can't be cured, but it can be treated

