

## Symptoms

Symptoms of arthritis can include pain and limited function of joints. Inflammation of the joints from arthritis is characterised by joint stiffness, swelling, redness and warmth. The inflamed joint can often be very tender. Many forms of arthritis can cause symptoms affecting various organs of the body that do not directly involve the joints. Some people with certain forms of arthritis can include fever, gland swelling, weight loss, fatigue, feeling unwell, and can extend to symptoms from abnormalities of organs such as the lungs, heart or kidneys.

## Treatment

There are many aspects to be taken into consideration when treating arthritis.

**Exercise** - is very important as it increases the lubrication of joints and strengthens the surrounding muscles, therefore putting less stress on the joints. Hydrotherapy is very helpful in the relief of pain and stiffness in the joints.

**Medication** – is usually necessary for those who suffer painful arthritis. Some sufferers can ease the pain with over the counter medications such as paracetamol or aspirin. Others may require specific medicines known as anti-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS). Common names of these medications are Celebrex and Mobic to name a few. People with rheumatoid arthritis can experience weight gain, due to their steroid medication side effects – corticosteroids.

**Surgery** – is now increasing as a treatment for those with arthritis. Replacement of badly affected joints such as the hips and knees can dramatically improve the outlook for people with arthritis.

**Diet** – Despite extensive research there is no concrete evidence linking diet and arthritis, apart from the effect of a diet rich in purines on gout. There is also little evidence to prove that taking expensive supplements or eating elaborate diets is beneficial. In fact the same results can be achieved through eating balanced meals that keep weight in control, while providing all the essential vitamins and minerals that you need. An individual's weight is the main link between their diet and arthritis, as being overweight places an additional burden on hips, knees, ankles and feet.

### References:

<http://health.ninemsn.com.au/article.aspx?id=2958>    <http://www.medicinenet.com/arthritis/page2.htm>  
<http://www.mydr.com.au/default.asp/article=275>

# arthritis

Arthritis affects about 15% of Canadians. It is commonly thought of as a disabling condition that affects the elderly, yet in fact 2 out of 3 people with arthritis are under 65 years old and most are able to lead normal to near-normal lives. Arthritis is a general term to describe a group of conditions in which there is inflammation of the joints that causes pain, stiffness, disability and deformity. There are more than 150 types of arthritis; however Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid arthritis are the most common.



**Osteoarthritis:** This is generally the most common type of arthritis, and is also known as degenerative arthritis. This can be thought of as the “wear and tear” form of the disease, and due to this it tends to affect people as they get older. Particular areas that are affected are those joints that take a lot of stresses and strains such as the weight bearing joints in the knees/hips and also the lower back, neck and hands. With this form the cartilage surfaces are damaged and worn, sometimes to the point where the underlying bone surfaces are in direct contact with each other.

**Rheumatoid arthritis:** With this form the main problem is inflammation that results from an over active immune system.

## Causes

The cause of arthritis will depend on the form of arthritis. Causes can include injury (leading to osteoarthritis), abnormal metabolism (such as gout), inheritance and for some unclear reasons, such as the case of rheumatoid arthritis.