

Watch out for: Claims the treatment has been used for centuries, and this is the reason why it should be considered effective. If a treatment has been used for centuries without entering mainstream medicine, it must not be effective or could be dangerous.

Watch out for: Promises of a money-back guarantee. Most people with failed treatments do not ask for money back.

MOST IMPORTANT: Ask your healthcare professional specifically about this treatment.

- How will this treatment help me?
- Will it work for me, how does it work, and is it safe?
- Will I have to stop taking prescription medications?
- What are the potential side effects?
- Does the treatment, supplement or diet, interact with prescribed medicines?
- How long before I start feeling better?

Questions to ask in order to find out if a treatment, supplement, or diet has been scientifically proven.

Find out if:

- Research studies have been conducted on the treatment.
- These studies were randomized and compared this treatment to other treatments.
- The studies were conducted on people like you (similar in age, gender and disease type).
- The studies were conducted by people who were not involved in making or selling the treatment.
- The studies were published in respected journals.

Experts in Arthritis

to learn more visit
www.ControlArthritis.org

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Experts in Arthritis

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This brochure is provided for informational purposes only. The tips are intended to offer only a general basis for individuals to discuss their medical condition with their healthcare professional. Always consult your healthcare professional before undertaking a new healthcare regimen.

Tips on a Healthy Diet and Arthritis

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Good nutrition can help prevent the symptoms of arthritis, and other conditions people with arthritis have, such as weak bones. This section provides some thoughts on arthritis-specific nutritional choices. **Always consult your healthcare professional before beginning any diet or taking supplements (herbs or vitamins).**

Glucosamine & chondroitin supplements and osteoarthritis pain:

Taking glucosamine sulfate (1,200-1,500 mg daily, as one dose of 1,500 mg, or three doses of 500 mg) may lower your joint pain a little. Be cautious with these supplements if you have diabetes.

Diets which may help reduce inflammation (swelling):

The Mediterranean Diet consists of vegetables, grains and fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids (e.g. salmon), uses healthy fats, such as olive oil, and replaces salt with herbs and spices.

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) consists of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy food. There is little research on this diet for people with arthritis, however, it has been shown to lower inflammation of the cardiovascular (heart) system.

Herbal supplements that may reduce inflammation:

Although there are no strong studies, some herbs and spices may reduce swelling: Ginger, Turmeric, Cat's Claw, Devil's Claw, Green Tea, Capsaicin. You can cook and bake with these herbs, but find out how much of each herb (fresh, dried, extract, or supplement) is safe. Taking too much can be harmful. For example, ginger has a daily limit of 4 grams for adults.

Fish oil may reduce inflammation for people with rheumatoid arthritis: Fish oil supplements containing omega-3 fatty acids may be beneficial. Work with your health care professional to pick the right amount. Or eat foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids: flaxseed, walnuts, salmon, soybeans, and sardines.

Grilled food may increase pain for people with rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis: Cooking food at high temperatures, especially frying or grilling, can increase Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs) that may lead to inflammation. Though most research on grilling or frying foods looked at inflammation in people with rheumatoid arthritis, people with osteoarthritis can have greater joint pain and stiffness if they have inflammation. Check your pain before and after grilled food.

Important vitamins and minerals

For people with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA):

Vitamin A & B3	May reduce inflammation
Vitamin B6	RA often leads to low levels of B6, which decreases as inflammation increases
Vitamin B12	May reduce fractures in older adults
Vitamin D	May reduce fracture risk caused by low levels of Vitamin D due to medications
Vitamin K	May help destroy inflammatory cells
Folate	May counteract side-effects of RA caused by methotrexate

For people with Osteoarthritis:

Vitamin B3	(niacinamide) May improve symptoms and suppress inflammation
Vitamin B12	May reduce fractures in older adults
Vitamin D	May reduce fracture risk caused by low levels of Vitamin D due to medications

These supplements may help improve arthritis symptoms, but can have harmful side-effects when taken with medications, and make other health conditions (ex. diabetes) worse. Talk with your healthcare professional before taking them.

The gluten-free diet: This diet is not good for everyone. People with celiac disease or gluten sensitivities diagnosed by a doctor must not eat food with gluten. Others should check to see if staying away from gluten helps their arthritis symptoms.

Nightshade vegetables: Includes many edible (non-poisonous) vegetables and herbs, the most common are tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplant, tobacco, paprika, and cayenne. They can cause increased pain in some people with arthritis, so check pain symptoms before and after eating them.

What to eat and not eat for people with rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis:

- Eat a well-balanced diet with fruits (1.5-2 cups), vegetables (2-3 cups), whole grains (1/3 cup), low-fat dairy (3 cups), and lean protein (3/4 cup).
- Limit packaged or processed foods as they often contain high amounts of fats, sodium, and sugar.
 - Eat few saturated fats and trans fats as they are linked to higher levels of cholesterol.
 - Limit salt to 2,300 mg per day.
 - Limit sugars (especially refined sugars) to 8 teaspoons per day.

Probiotics and reducing symptoms in rheumatoid arthritis:

We do not know, but some patients have less pain and improved function with probiotic food. Whether or not they improve symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, foods with probiotics, such as Greek yogurt, are a great way to support bone health and help the gastrointestinal tract (stomach).

Adapted from information provided by Amanda Bright, CMD, University of Pittsburgh (Revised 9/9/15, 8/9/17)

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Tips on Talking to your Healthcare Professional

When talking to a healthcare professional, it is important that you take **PART**.

Plan ahead: Write down your questions on an index card. If you are tech savvy, store them on your iPhone or similar device. This makes sure all of your questions are answered.

Ask questions: If you do not understand the medical terms your healthcare professional uses or why your healthcare professional is prescribing a test or medication, this is your opportunity to ASK. Let your healthcare professional know what you have learned about arthritis from family, friends, and the internet, to make sure it is accurate. Ask all of your questions and take notes. Take a recorder if you want to be certain that you got it right, but be sure to ask the healthcare professional for permission to do so before pressing the record button.

Repeat in your own words what the healthcare professional has said: You might say, “So, Dr. Smith, what you are saying is that my heartburn may be caused by XYZ medication, and that you suggest I substitute medication ABC instead to see if it feels better on my stomach. Is that correct?”

Take action: Do what you and your healthcare professional decide. If, for whatever reason, you do not want to do something, feel that you are unable to pay for a particular test or treatment, or are afraid to take a medicine based on things that you’ve heard, your healthcare professional needs to know right then and there. Do not leave the office knowing that you may not take action. This will not help you feel any better.

Finally: Your musculoskeletal health is dependent upon three major factors that you may not have considered. Do not be surprised if your healthcare professional asks about your **weight**, your **level of physical activity**, and whether you have a **healthy lifestyle** (for example, if you smoke). It is important that you talk openly with your healthcare professional. Be **HONEST** with your healthcare team.

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Tips for Controlling Pain in Arthritis

Pain is common in most types of arthritis. Pain can stop you from doing the things you want or need to do. What many people don’t know is that arthritis pain can be controlled. Here are several tips for controlling pain.

Take the right type and dose of medication: There are many medications on the market that can control pain. However, they only work if they are taken correctly. Work with your healthcare professional to find the medication and dosage that works for you. Be sure to tell your healthcare professional if a medication stops working, if you develop side effects, or if you have any changes in your other medications.

Exercise: Numerous studies have found that exercise reduces pain and increases energy. Your local Arthritis Foundation may offer classes designed for people with arthritis. Talk with your healthcare professional first, to make sure exercise is safe for you, then contact your local gym or Arthritis Foundation branch.

Get enough sleep: With our busy schedules, we often don’t get enough sleep. If you are sleeping less than 7–8 hours per day, you may be making your pain worse. Practice good sleep habits and get a good night’s sleep. If you still feel tired, get checked for sleep apnea, a serious sleep problem in which a person’s breathing is interrupted during sleep.

Practice relaxation techniques like meditation, guided imagery, deep breathing, etc.: Relaxation is more than just sitting with a good book. It is a method to calm and control your body and mind. Learning to relax is a skill that takes practice. There are many ways to relax, so find the one that works best for you. Consider taking a class such as yoga, buying relaxation tapes, or researching techniques from reputable sources online (such as the Mayo Clinic or WebMD). Find time to practice relaxation daily.

Understand that emotions play an important part in your disease management: Anger, fear, doubt, and other negative emotions can make your pain worse.

There are techniques you can use to recognize and control negative emotions. Look for information online or talk with a healthcare professional to help develop skills to control negative emotions.

Control trigger events: Certain things you do will increase pain (triggers). Learn what these are and eliminate or reduce them. One way to do this is to track what you do and your pain level, and then look for patterns.

Be kind to your joints: Arthritis affects many joints in your body. Bearing weight or putting that joint in an awkward position can add stress to the already damaged joints. You can work with your healthcare professional to identify activities that put your joints at risk and identify ways to eliminate them. The general rule of thumb to protect your joints is to use the largest joint for the job; for example, carrying a bag over the elbow rather than held with the fingers.

Put out flares: Sometimes you will experience an increase in pain (flares). Learn ways to reduce sudden pain. This might include massage, stretches, or analgesics (pain relievers). Applying moist heat may feel good, but if the joint is swollen, applying cold compresses (no more than 20 minutes at a time) will bring the swelling down. Find methods to distract yourself – read a book, play a game, visit a friend, go for a walk – any activity that will take your mind away from the pain.

Eat well: Good nutrition is important for a healthy body. Eat a balanced, moderate diet. There is some evidence that certain foods can improve or worsen pain. If you believe a food is causing pain, remove it from your diet for a month to see if the pain improves. But don’t eliminate an entire category of food (such as fat or protein).

Make yourself comfortable: Sometimes our homes or offices don’t fit us well, chairs are too hard, counters are too low, and rooms are too cluttered. Take the time to make sure that the spaces you live and work in are as comfortable as possible and fit your size and shape.

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Tips on Supplements and Arthritis

Treatments, supplements, and special diets need scientific testing to prove they work. It is sometimes hard to separate fact from fiction when determining if a treatment is effective, does nothing, or worse, causes harm. Not all treatments work for all people. The following might help you to identify if a treatment, supplement, or diet has been scientifically proven to be effective and is right for you.

Watch out for: Claims the treatment will cure many different diseases. Different diseases have different causes. No one treatment can effectively treat multiple problems.

Watch out for: Claims the treatment will quickly and completely cure a chronic condition. As of now, we don’t have a way to cure diseases like arthritis, diabetes, or obesity. People with arthritis and other chronic diseases find this frustrating and turn to what promises to be an easy fix when those fixes just don’t exist.

Watch out for: The only evidence to support the treatment is testimonials from customers. Statements from customers like “It worked for me” are very poor evidence that a treatment works. Testimonials, by definition, are always positive, so you don’t see the negative comments.

Watch out for: Claims the treatment isn’t being used in the traditional medical community because it is so effective that the medical community (particularly the drug manufacturers) has suppressed it to maintain profits. People in the medical community genuinely want their patients to get better. If they knew of an effective treatment, they would prescribe it for their patients.

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