

ARTHRITIS

There are two types of arthritis one is due to wear and tear which is more common and two due to your blood attacking your joints.

When your blood cells are attacking your joints, you have pain in multiple joints and should get blood tests for Lupus, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Lyme Disease. These diseases are rare and this forum will not discuss it.

As mentioned, most arthritis is due to wear and tear, i.e. more you used or injured your joint in the past the worse the arthritis will be.

Once the damage is done to the joint whether due to injury or over use, the damage never goes away completely and slowly festers. Old injuries come back to haunt you.

Since the arthritis is due to wear and tear, there really is no way to repair the joint. Only solution is joint replacement but our artificial joints and surgery are not even close to what nature has given us.

As always, the most important thing about arthritis is prevention rather than cure. Once the damage is done, it is too late. What that means is that it is important to have proper posture (i.e. sit up straight, sleep on proper surface and use ergonomic chairs) and proper equipment (i.e. proper shoes and walking surface)

Once you have arthritis, it does not matter what joint, back or neck, you only have four choices:

- 1) Conservative: Learn to live with the disease, proper posture, proper equipment, heating pad, anti-inflammatory medications (with caution), Tylenol and some muscle strengthening exercise if appropriate. There are other medications to modify the sensation such as gabapentin, amitriptyline and paroxetine.
- 2) If conservative does not work and you want to go further, then I recommend x-ray to make sure nothing bad (cancer) and go for physical therapy. Therapist includes acupuncture, physical therapy and chiropractor. X-rays are otherwise useless because everybody has arthritis (if you have used the joint) and amount of arthritis seen on x-ray does not determine symptoms and we know the bone is not broken but it will rule out cancer eating the bone.
- 3) If therapy is not helping, then you can go for injections of steroids or lubricant. This is the time to get MRI and see the orthopedist. MRI and x-rays do not cure and do not help in the treatment of chronic arthritis.
- 4) If injections do not help, then you go for surgery, anywhere from cleaning the joint, removing damage or replacement.

Unfortunately, nothing cures or works permanently. Then, you start all over again from step 1.