

HELP FOR OSTEOARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis by definition means “inflammation of a joint”, but unlike Rheumatoid arthritis it is not inflammatory (except in the late stages) but is really a wearing out process, that is better described as “degenerative joint disease”. With Osteoarthritis (OA) one or many joints undergo degenerative changes whereby cartilage (a connective tissue, rubbery in nature that cushions bones and joints) breaks down and wears away causing bones to rub together increasing joint stiffness, swelling, pain and reducing range of motion. OA is the most common joint affliction, affecting men and women equally up to the age of 55. Signs and symptoms are usually more apparent after the age of 50 but more common in women than men over the age of 55.

Though the cause of OA is unknown and is associated with aging, other factors including hereditary (mom or dad have history of OA), previous injury to a joint or bone including fractures, auto injury, overuse due to sports or jobs that include repetitive motion, obesity or a history of an inflammatory joint disease

Some of the common signs and symptoms of OA can include: joint pain that gets worse with use or activity and better with rest (common sign of spinal stenosis), a decrease in range of motion at the affected joint and surrounding joints, stiffness, weakness, swelling, or radiating pain into the arms or legs (usually due to OA in the neck or low back). Diagnosing osteoarthritis is usually by physical examination and x-ray. There is no one specific test used to diagnose OA.

TREATMENT

Osteoarthritis cannot be cured but you can help control it with Chiropractic care. Specific treatment goals will include reducing pain, increasing range of motion, decreasing inflammation and swelling if present and restoring proper joint function. Chiropractic adjustments (Chiropractic manipulative therapy) realigns and restores motion to the joint, increases lubrication in the joint and hopefully will help decrease or slow down further progression of the disease. Other therapies your Doctor of Chiropractic might utilize include cold laser therapy to decrease inflammation and promote healing at the cellular level, electrical stimulation to decrease pain and relax muscles, ultrasound to decrease inflammation in the joints and decompression traction to increase joint space in the neck or back and remove any nerve pressure. Acupuncture has also been shown to help control pain associated with OA. Your Chiropractor may also recommend proper nutritional supplements and exercises that may prove helpful in controlling this condition. So, see a Chiropractor today and get on the road to health and wellness, naturally.

Dr. Larry Bridge is a resident of Stanly County and practices at Montgomery County Chiropractic Center with offices in Albemarle and Troy. He is board certified in Acupuncture. For more info visit his website www.drbridgechiropractic.com or call 704-982-2102.