

## **Joint Pain**

### **What is joint pain?**

Joint pain can be a symptom experienced by both adults and children depending on underlying factors such as age, recent illness, activity or trauma. You may experience acute joint pain immediately after an injury or blunt trauma or have persistent mild aching pain and soreness caused by overuse such as pain in your back after doing gardening. Any joint in your body may be at risk. Stiffness and painful movement may occur in the hips, knees, fingers, feet, or the spine. The cause of your pain and limitation may be due to a form of arthritis. Arthritis can result from the normal wear and tear of the joints, or from injury, inflammation, infection of some unknown cause.

### **What are the options for treatment of joint pain?**

The goals of treatment are to reduce pain, minimize disability and maintain range of motion and mobility.

### **When to seek medical help:**

If the joint quickly becomes swollen and is intensely painful, seek medical help.

### **What can you do to reduce chronic joint pain?**

A combination of the following can be very helpful in chronic joint pain:

#### **1. Over-the-Counter Medications**

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are usually the first drugs tried for almost any kind of joint pain. There are dozens of NSAIDs. Aspirin is the most common; others include ibuprofen (Advil and Motrin), and naprosyn (Aleve).

#### **2. Exercise**

Exercise keeps your muscles strong and helps keep you flexible. But don't overdo it. Exercises that don't strain your joints are best. This may include tightening your muscles and then relaxing them a number of times. You can do this with all of your major muscles several times throughout the day. Another good exercise for arthritis is movement in a swimming pool, with much of your body's weight held up by the water.

#### **3. Use of cold and heat**

Using heat may reduce your pain and stiffness. Heat can be applied through warm baths, hot towels or heating pads. Ice packs can also be tried, as can alternating heat with ice packs.

#### **4. Weight control**

The less weight your bones have to carry, the less stress on the joints.