

Arthritis

Are your joint pains just a sign of aging, or are they linked to an immune system disorder? If you aren't sure, schedule a consultation with our New Haven clinic to determine the condition causing your joints to swell and ache. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) report that about one in two people will develop age related arthritis in one or both knees by their 85th birthday. If this problem is striking you at a much younger age, you may be dealing with rheumatoid arthritis instead.

What is Arthritis?

The most common form of arthritis is also known as osteoarthritis. This is a degenerative disorder that affects the joints, most commonly the knee, hip, or wrist and fingers. Wear and tear is the primary cause behind this kind of damage to the joints. As you work the knees, the cartilage becomes worn or depleted and allows the joint to grind against itself. Rheumatoid arthritis involves damage from the body's immune system instead. Something triggers the body to start attacking one or more joints, leading to inflammation that gets more severe with time.

Arthritis Symptoms

Rheumatoid arthritis includes symptoms of general immune system over activity, like fever and fatigue. Osteoarthritis rarely causes these issues because it is a simple physical damage disorder with no systemic component. Both types of arthritis can cause:

- Stiffening that develops within just a few days or weeks
- Waking with stiffness in the affected joint
- Redness and tenderness of the joints
- Swelling of joints that is visible to the eye
- Fatigue
- Hard nodules that grow under the skin on or around the joint
- Chronic joint pain that seems to increase with cold weather or activity

Cause of Arthritis

The causes of osteoarthritis include:

- Repetitive activity like jogging or typing

- Athletic activity that stresses out your joints
- Hereditary conditions that cause degeneration of the cartilage in each joint
- Development of bone spurs due to injury or other issue
- Obesity
- Repeated surgeries in one part of the body
- Diabetes

Unfortunately, it is not clear what causes rheumatoid arthritis. It is currently believed that there is a genetic component to the disorder that triggers the immune system to attack the synovium lining between the joints. There may also be bacterial infections and injuries that can trigger the development of RA.

Arthritis Risks

Age related joint pain is usually chronic and hard to completely eliminate. However, it also tends to respond well to conservative treatments like exercise and anti-inflammatory medications. Treating RA symptoms is harder. If you don't seek immune system treatment to slow the joint damage, you could develop further problems like:

- Loss of shape or movement in a badly affected joint
- Stiffness that makes it hard to use fine hand movements
- Numbness and tingling that spreads throughout the extremities connected to the affected joint
- Extreme tenderness that is irritated even by clothing

Arthritis Treatment Options

Improving your diet with healthy fats and nutrients that your joints need to rebuild cartilage can have surprising effects. We can test you for food or environmental sensitivities in our New Haven clinic to see if something in your routine is making your aches and pains worse. Our treatments include:

- Gentle manipulation and massage to restore flexibility to a stiff wrist or knee
- Chiropractic adjustment to release tension
- Exercise programs that can lower irritation without further damaging the joint

Arthritis Doesn't Have To Be A Way Of Life

While about half of the population will deal with minor arthritis at some point in life, this doesn't mean that you can't work to prevent or minimize joint damage. Taking care to minimize repetition and resting between workouts will help you retain healthy cartilage and joint cushions into your golden years. If your immune system starts attacking your joints, seeking prompt treatment in the New Haven area can slow down the spread of RA.

Call now for a FREE Consultation (260) 493-6565). Consultations can be done online, via the phone, or in person.