



## Information about Arthritis

### **Osteoarthritis**

Osteoarthritis (OA), also called osteoarthroses or degenerative joint disease, is the most common type of arthritis. OA is a chronic condition characterized by the breakdown of the joint's cartilage. Cartilage is the part of the joint that cushions the ends of the bones and allows easy movement of joints. The breakdown of cartilage causes the bones to rub against each other, causing stiffness, pain and loss of movement in the joint.

### **Impact of Osteoarthritis:**

- OA affects nearly 27 million Americans.
- OA typically affects only certain joints, such as the hips, hands, knees, low back and neck.
- After age 50, women are more often affected by OA than men.

### **Symptoms of Osteoarthritis:**

- Pain or stiffness in joints after periods of inactivity or excessive use
- Grating or “catching” sensation during joint movement
- Bony growths at the margins of affected joints



### **Causes of Osteoarthritis:**

The cause of OA is not yet known, but certain factors increase the risk of developing OA.

- o Heredity
- o Overweight
- o Joint injury
- o Repeated overuse of certain joints
- o Lack of physical activity
- o Nerve injury
- o Aging

### **Diagnosis of Osteoarthritis:**

- The diagnosis of OA is typically based on a medical history and physical examination.
- Doctors sometimes recommend that patients have X-rays or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to rule out other causes of pain and to determine how much joint damage has occurred.
- Joint aspiration, a procedure in which fluid is drained from the affected joints and examined, and blood tests also may be used to rule out other forms of arthritis in the body.

### **Management of Osteoarthritis:**

- Treatment of OA varies with the severity of symptoms and focuses on decreasing pain and improving joint movement.
- Treatment plans often include a combination of drugs, rest, physical activity, joint protection, use of heat or cold to reduce pain, and physical or occupational therapy.

**Rheumatoid arthritis** is a chronic disease, mainly characterized by inflammation of the lining, or synovium, of the joints. It can lead to long-term joint damage, resulting in chronic pain, loss of function and disability.

**Juvenile arthritis (JA)** refers to any form of arthritis or an arthritis-related condition that develops in children or teenagers who are less than 18 years of age. Approximately 294,000 children under the age of 18 are affected by pediatric arthritis and rheumatologic conditions.