

Your Spinal Health Questions Answered

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with Dr Debbie Saxton

Arthritis

Dear Debbie

Just before Christmas I had an x-ray of my hip I was diagnosed with arthritis. Is there anything that chiropractic care could offer?

Mr D aged 59

Your letter did not specify which type of arthritis you were diagnosed with but osteoarthritis is by far the commonest to affect our joints so I will presume you have that. There are many words used to describe arthritis – spondylitis, wear and tear, osteoarthritis, degenerative arthritis and they all apply to the same condition, the roughening of our joint surfaces and the narrowing of our joint spaces.

Arthritis is not a condition to be afraid of, in fact, it is more helpful to accept you will develop it and then do everything in your power to slow the onset and progression. There are many things you can do, but understanding the causes behind the condition is important.

The wearing out of our joints is no different to developing wrinkles, it is part of the ageing process. Unfortunately just as sun exposure accelerates the appearance of wrinkles, factors exist that accelerate arthritis. The commonest of these is increased trauma to a joint. This may be caused by chronic or acute stress on a joint resulting from poor posture or an injury. I would say these are the 2 biggest factors to consider. Diet also plays a vital role, if basic nutrients are missing from our diet, growth and repair of the bones throughout our lives will be impaired. Exercise is also an essential component to the wellbeing of our joints.

Arthritis is one of the commonest complaints people present with in our clinic, whichever joint is affected the advice will always be the same:

- 1) Get a thorough check-up for full assessment of the condition, this may include an x-ray examination, then your chiropractor will embark on a course of chiropractic care to improve the motion of that joint.
- 2) Take supplements Omega 3, glucosamine with



Above: Fish oil supplements that contain Omega 3

chondritin and aim to stay on these for life.

- 3) Take regular exercise, specifically directed at the problem area, non impact exercise such as pilates or yoga are best. Make sure you do some range of movement exercise daily.

The most important piece of advice would be to say never believe it is hereditary and you can do nothing about it. Accelerated onset of degenerative arthritis is caused by lifestyle choices, understanding this is very empowering, as the ability to prevent it then lies with you.

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