Arthritis - Nonspecific

Arthritis is pain, redness, warmth, or puffiness (*swelling*) of a joint. The joint may be stiff or hurt when you move it. One or more joints may be affected. There are many types of arthritis. Your doctor may not know what type you have right away. The most common cause of arthritis is wear and tear on the joint (*osteoarthritis*).

HOME CARE

- Only take medicine as told by your doctor.
- Rest the joint as much as possible.
- If your joint is puffy, keep it raised (*elevated*).
- Cold packs may be used for very bad joint pain, 10 to 15 minutes every hour. Ask your doctor if it is okay for you to use hot packs.
- Morning stiffness is often helped by a warm shower.
- Use crutches if the painful joint is in your leg.
- Drink enough water and fluids to keep your pee (*urine*) clear or pale yellow.
- Follow your doctor's instructions for diet and physical activity.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You have a temperature by mouth above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- You have very bad joint pain, puffiness, or redness.
- Many joints become painful and puffy.
- There is very bad back pain or leg weakness.
- You cannot control when you poop (*bowel movement*) or pee (*urinate*).

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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