Osteoarthritis

You have joint or back pain from degenerative joint disease (*osteoarthritis*). Osteoarthritis is an inflammation around the bone. This is the common wear and tear arthritis. This is something that all of us will develop in varying degrees as we age.

With time, the cushions (*cartilage*) covering the ends of the bones begin to wear away. This means we begin to rub bone on bone. This causes the pain in our joints. Factors contributing to this are weight, longevity, and overuse of your joints at work. This will affect your joints. It sometimes leads to other problems. Lack of exercise creates muscle weakness. Once muscle weakness develops, it is easier to develop leg cramps and loss of motion.

There are many things you can do to prevent or help problems. Try to stay physically and mentally healthy. You may take anti-inflammatory medications for pain. Your caregiver can help you to find the best medication for you. Moderate exercise is helpful. Using heat prior to exercise and ice packs following exercise is beneficial. You should not exercise to the point of fatigue or pain.

Your caregiver will instruct you if she or he feels that other measures or devices would be useful to reduce stress on weight bearing arms/hands or legs/feet (*extremities*). Surgery is sometimes very helpful. The most common of these are the hip and knee joint replacement.

Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 06/05/2009
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