

# MANAGING KNEE PAIN



## PAIN MEDICATION

Many patients with arthritis take a category of medications called NSAIDs. These medications are thought to help reduce inflammation at the site of both muscle and joint. Some NSAIDs such as ibuprofen or naproxen are available over the counter without a prescription. Other NSAIDs are only available by prescription. Narcotic pain medications have not been studied for chronic pain and have significant short and long term side effects. Be sure to let your health care provider know about all medications and supplements that you are taking.

## MY KNEES HURT! WHAT CAN I DO?

There are many reasons for knee pain. Patients may have osteoarthritis, degenerative changes, rheumatoid arthritis, gout or injuries to the ligaments or tendons in the knee that can contribute to pain. Simple blood tests, evaluation by your health care provider and x-rays, ultrasound or MRI can better identify what is causing the knee pain. Once the cause is identified there are many treatment options available for patients.

## SUPPLEMENTS:

There is some literature to support the use of glucosamine supplements to decrease knee pain caused by osteoarthritis. The typical recommended dose is 500 mg three times a day. There are many forms of this supplement and you should ask your health care provider which one is best for you. Those who are allergic to shellfish or have a sulfa allergy need to use these supplements only under the direction of a health care provider due to a potential allergic reaction. Side effects are typically mild and usually only seen at higher doses; these include upset stomach, heartburn, drowsiness, and headache. It should be noted that one large meta-analysis from 2010 concluded that glucosamine provided no benefit to people with arthritis pain.

Cherry juice has been found to help reduce the level of inflammation in both healthy patients and in patients with gout. Turmeric, a spice, has also been found to have anti-inflammatory effects; you may want to discuss dosing of these supplements with your health care provider.

## EXERCISE:

Exercise strengthens the ligaments and bones and is now done before any knee surgery to help improve outcomes. There are many types of exercises that can help the knee. Ask your health care provider what might work best for you. Resistance bands, hand weights or even water bottles can be used to help increase muscle strength as your endurance improves.

## WEIGHT LOSS:

It is simple physics: If you lose weight, your body does not have to work as hard to carry your body mass around. It is thought for every 5 lbs you lose you take 20 pounds of pressure off of your knees, feet, and lower back.