

# Patient Information: Osteoarthritis

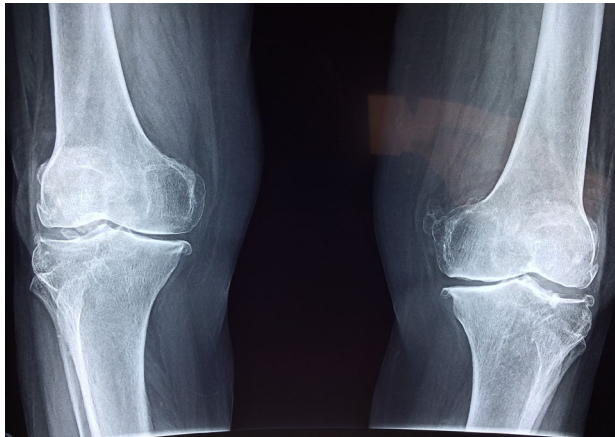


## What is osteoarthritis (OA)?

- Osteoarthritis is when “wear and tear” breaks down the cartilage on the end of your bones, and the cartilage can no longer cushion your bones from the impact of activities and daily life
- Osteoarthritis commonly develops with age, but can occur in your earlier years due to injury or abnormal alignment of your joints

## What are the symptoms of osteoarthritis?

- Pain and stiffness of the affected joint, that may improve with activity
- Typically occurs in the hips, knees, and shoulders
- Swelling may occur, and in severe cases the joint can catch, lock, or give way



## How is osteoarthritis diagnosed?

- X-rays are commonly used to diagnose OA, as they can show decreased space between bones (cartilage degeneration) and bone spurs from friction between the bones
- MRIs are only indicated if your doctor suspects a separate soft-tissue injury as well
- Blood tests may be obtained to rule out an inflammatory type of arthritis (rheumatoid arthritis)



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## How is osteoarthritis treated?

- Acute increases in arthritis pain are managed with conservative care:
  - Rest, doing lower impact activities
  - Compression, ice, anti-inflammatory medication
  - Braces and walking aids to decrease joint stress
  - Physical therapy and strengthening of the muscles that support the affected joint
- Keeping your weight at a healthy level and getting regular low-impact exercise supports joint health
- Anti-inflammatory injections help control pain
- Viscosupplementation injections help control pain, and slow the progress of degeneration
- Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injections can help with pain control, slowing of disease progress, and possible improvement of cartilage health
- Surgery may be indicated for more severe OA cases



## How can I prevent osteoarthritis?

- Keep your weight at a healthy level, and perform regular low-impact exercise to strengthen the muscles that support your joints
- Get medical evaluation for injuries- if they do not heal properly, this can lead to osteoarthritis
- Seek medical attention for joint pains- early OA can be managed to slow or prevent progression

## Where can I learn more about osteoarthritis?

- Education- OrthoInfo:  
<https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/diseases--conditions/osteoarthritis/>
- Healthy lifestyle resources- Dr. Janine Pardo:  
[www.janinepardomd.com](http://www.janinepardomd.com)
- Gentle yoga- Yoga with Adriene:  
<http://yogawithadriene.com/gentle-yoga-practice/>

To schedule an appointment, visit the Steward St. Elizabeth's Sports Medicine website at: [semc.org/services-directory/orthopedics/sportsmedicine](http://semc.org/services-directory/orthopedics/sportsmedicine)  
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