



# OSTEOARTHRITIS

Bromley

Well

HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated July 2024

## What is Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a long term condition that causes joints to become painful and stiff. It is the common type of arthritis in the UK. Osteoarthritis can affect any joint in the body but the most commonly affected joints are the knees, hips and small hand joints.

## What are the symptoms?

Joint pain and stiffness are the main symptoms of osteoarthritis. Some people also experience swelling, tenderness and a grating or crackling sound when moving the affected joints.

## What are the causes?

In osteoarthritis, the protective cartilage on the ends of your bones breaks down, causing pain, swelling and problems moving the joints. Bony growth can develop, and the area can become inflamed (red and swollen).

Although the exact cause of osteoarthritis is not known, several factors may increase the risk. These include:

- Joint injury - Overusing your joint when it has not had enough time to heal after an injury or operation
- Other conditions - Osteoarthritis can occur in joints severely damaged by a previous or existing condition such as rheumatoid arthritis or gout
- Age - Your risk of developing osteoarthritis increases as you age
- Family History - Osteoarthritis may run in families
- Being overweight - Being overweight puts excess strain on your joints, particularly those that bear most of your weight such as your knees and hips

## What about treatment?

Severe symptoms can be managed with treatments such as:

- Medication- to relieve your pain
- A structured exercise plan carried out under the supervision of a physiotherapist
- Surgery may be carried out if damage to joints is very severe

## SELF CARE TIPS

### KEEP PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Exercise such as swimming and cycling are ideal as they don't put too much strain on your joints.

### EAT A HEALTHY DIET

Eat a well balanced diet, ensuring you eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.

Maintain a healthy weight can help to reduce strain on the joints. Some people find that certain foods trigger their Osteoarthritis to flare up so it is always worth keeping a food diary to track anything like this. It also may be worth increasing your intake of anti-inflammatory food such as garlic, antioxidant rich berries etc.

### WEAR SUPPORTIVE FOOTWEAR

Wearing comfortable and supportive footwear helps to support joints throughout the lower body.

**To register with Bromley Well:**

**Freephone 0808 278 7898**

**Or register online:**

**[www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer](http://www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer)**

**Contact Lifestyle Support direct**

**07985 431484 / 07985 444210**

**or email**

**[enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk)**



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## FURTHER RESOURCES

### Versus arthritis

**Help Line: 0800 5200 520**

A National charity providing information on the latest research into arthritis and tips and advice on managing the condition. Online support for people living with arthritis.

### Arthritis Action

**Help Line: 020 3781 7120/0800 652 3188**

A National charity offering healthy eating advice, physical therapies, exercise tips and pain management techniques.

### NHS Conditions Arthritis

NHS conditions pages contain information about the causes, symptoms and treatment of arthritis and advice for people living with the condition.

### BDA fact sheet osteoarthritis

The Association of UK Dietitians food fact sheets containing diet advice for people living with arthritis and tips for managing the condition.

**References:** NHS conditions <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/symptoms/> NICE <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng226>

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