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ARTHRITIS

Welcome to the latest edition of the CBCHS Quarterly Newsletter!
This edition features an article about arthritis and general facts.
I hope you find this newsletter helpful. I would like to acknowledge
Arthritis Victoria for the content of this newsletter.
Warmest regards and look after your own health!
Chris Fox CEO

What is Arthritis?

The word arthritis comes from Greek:

arth- = joint and -itis = inflammation
So, arthritis really means inflammation of the joint.

However, arthritis is not a single condition. There are well over 150 kinds of arthritis and related musculoskeletal conditions, all of which affect one or more joints in the body, and some of these forms of arthritis don't involve any inflammation. Perhaps it is more useful to think of arthritis meaning problems with the joint.

Living with Arthritis

Pain, stiffness and inflammation are hallmarks of arthritis, which is not a single disease but a range of 150 or more separate conditions. Two common forms are osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

Osteoarthritis is essentially a degenerative process with symptoms including pain, stiffness,

muscle weakness and cramps or muscle spasm around the affected joint.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a complex, frequently progressive disease which is characterised by inflammation and joint deterioration.

Some patients with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis find exercise, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and rest can help, but medication may often be required under a doctor's supervision. The types of medication used to treat arthritis range from analgesics such as paracetamol and aspirin (also an anti-inflammatory) to prescription medications such as the nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Although cures are possible in some forms of arthritis, the basis of much therapy recommended by doctors is to control the disease and therefore the symptoms.



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Self management

For people who live with a chronic health condition such as arthritis the cycle of pain, negative emotions, multiple doctors and treatments, can very easily become the reality of everyday life. Chronic conditions affect us physically and emotionally. There are many changes to adapt to such as managing pain and fatigue in a situation of uncertainty about how severe symptoms will be the next day or into the future.

It is easy to become depressed, feel helpless and "give up". You can decide to do nothing about managing your condition. This is a form of passive self management. Unfortunately people who choose to be passive self managers too often describe their life like a vicious cycle.

The alternative is to be an active self manager.

Active Self Management

People who are active self managers generally report some of the following:

- Increased energy levels
- Decreased fatigue
- Less anger, fear and frustration
- Feeling more in control of their health
- Feeling happier and more optimistic
- That they are more able to do the things that they want to do.



For more information about Arthritis including self management, please visit www.arthritisvic.org.au or call **1800 011 041**.

CBCHS is able to assist arthritis sufferers with various services (self-help group, home modifications, physiotherapy, swimming group, day activities). Please call our Intake worker on **8587 0200** for more information.

CBCHS would like to thank and acknowledge Arthritis Victoria for the content in this newsletter.

CBCHS WEBSITE

To find out more information about us, general information, services, health promotion, events and publications, go to:

www.cbchs.org.au