

ARTHRITIS



DEFINITION:

Arthritis: Inflammation of one or more joints. In most cases, arthritis is progressive, resulting in muscular stiffness. Arthritis left untreated can lead to joint immobility, muscle atrophy and contractures. In the early stages, the small joints of the hands and feet are usually affected.

MOST COMMON TYPES OF ARTHRITIS:

Adult Rheumatoid Arthritis: Considered to be the nations number one crippling disease. Usual onset is between 25 and 50 years of age. This type of arthritis affects women three times more than men.

Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (Still's Disease): Considered a majorcrippler of young children. Usual onset is before 7 years of age.

Osteoarthritis: Second most frequent type of arthritis. This type affects the hyaline cartilage in weight bearing joints. Usually occurs because of destruction of bone coverings at the joints due to repeated use or trauma.

Ankylosing Spondylitis: Affects the axial skeleton and large peripheral joints of the body. Most prevalent in males with the age of onset ranging from 20 to 40 years of age. Common symptoms include recurrent back pain and early morning stiffness.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ARTHRITIS:

- Inflammation of a joint
- Joints are sensitive to touch
- Deformity of limbs
- Limping due to pain
- Morning stiffness
- Recurrent back pain
- Ankylosed joints (immobile joints due to the union of bones because cartilage has been destroyed)

TEACHING TIPS:

- Encourage low impact aerobic activities, such as swimming, walking, cycling, and water exercise.
- Plan exercises that will strengthen the muscles around joints (extensors, abductors, internal rotators and pronators).
- Encourage range of motion exercises be done two to three times a day.
- Plan activities that involve creative dance. These activities stress extension and stretching techniques.
- Utilize gradual stretching exercises and isometric muscle contraction exercises.
- Activity should never increase pain or tire the individual, so normal recovery is not obtained the next day.

CONTRAINDICATED ACTIVITIES:

- Jumping activities (i.e., jump rope, trampolines)
- Activities where falls might be more frequent (i.e., roller skating, skiing, gymnastics)
- Sitting for long periods of time
- Repeated hopping, leaping or movement exploration activities in which the body leaves the floor
- Contact sports, particularly football and soccer

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.