

Our Country Practice



SWIFT STREET MEDICAL CENTRE



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SWIFT STREET MEDICAL CENTRE

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(9am to 5pm - Monday to Friday)

Hay Fever



Hay fever is the common name for a condition called allergic rhinitis, which means an allergy that affects the nose. Most people associate hay fever with spring, when airborne pollens from grasses are at their peak. However, hay fever can occur at any time of the year. This is known as perennial allergic rhinitis, which is usually caused by a reaction to allergens around the home, such as dust mites, moulds or animal hair or fur or occupational allergens.

Symptoms of hay fever

Some of the symptoms include: sneezing; a runny or stuffy nose; itchy ears, nose and throat; red, itchy or watery eyes; headaches. In some cases, the symptoms of hay fever can be so severe that a person can't sleep or concentrate, and may feel tired or unwell.

Hay fever is an allergic reaction

Your nose acts as a filter. The tiny hairs and mucus that line the nasal passages trap dust, pollens and other microscopic particles. A person with hay fever is allergic to some of the particles that get trapped in the nose, such as pollen. An allergic reaction means the immune system treats a harmless substance as if it is dangerous, and launches an 'attack'. The nasal passages become inflamed and more mucus is produced.

Reducing hay fever symptoms

Suggestions to prevent or limit symptoms of hay fever include: Stay indoors as much as possible in spring, on windy days or after thunderstorms; In your garden, choose plants that are pollinated by birds or insects, rather than plants that release their seeds into the air; Replace your lawn with types of artificial grass, bricked or paved areas; Splash your eyes often with cold water to flush out any pollen; Reduce your exposure to dust and dust mites, animals and animal hair or fur (dander).

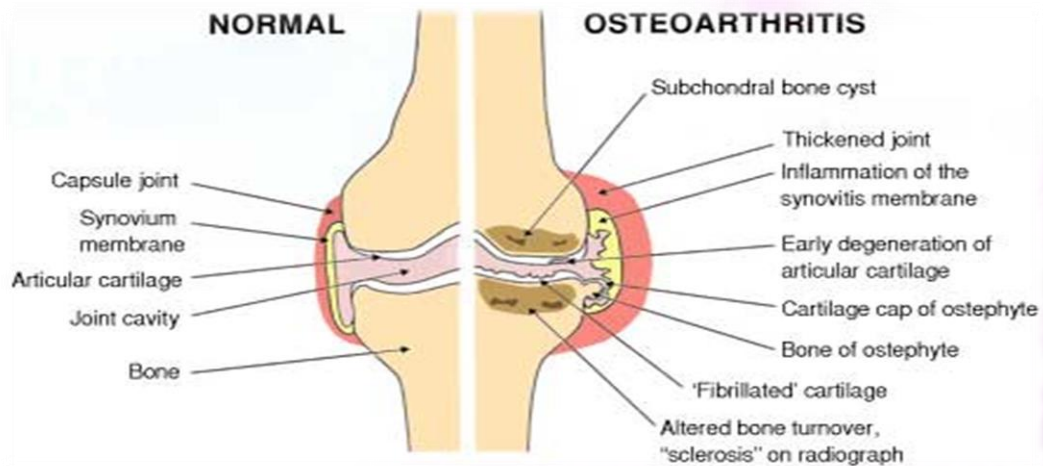
Where to get help

Your doctor or the Pharmacist

Things to remember

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to environmental allergens such as pollens, dust mite, moulds and animal hair. Perennial allergic rhinitis occurs all year round. Avoiding allergic triggers is the best way to reduce the frequency of hay fever symptoms.

Osteoarthritis



Osteoarthritis is one of the most common forms of arthritis. Osteoarthritis is most likely to develop in people aged over 45 years, although it can occur in younger people. Many people will develop symptoms as they age.

A joint is a structure that allows movement at the meeting point of two bones. Cartilage is a firm cushion that covers the ends of the two bones, absorbing shock and enabling the bones to glide smoothly over each other. The joint is wrapped inside a tough capsule filled with synovial fluid. This fluid lubricates the cartilage and other structures in the joint and keeps it moving smoothly.

With osteoarthritis, the cartilage becomes brittle and breaks down. Some pieces of cartilage may even break away and float around inside the synovial fluid. Deterioration of cartilage can lead to degeneration in the joint. Eventually, the cartilage can break down so much that it no longer cushions the two bones.

Symptoms of osteoarthritis

The symptoms of osteoarthritis can vary from one person to the next. Some of the more common symptoms include: stiffness; joint pain; muscle weakness; joint instability; reduced range of movement; a grating or grinding sensation (crepitus) – joints creaking or crunching as you move.

Joints affected by osteoarthritis

All joints can be affected by osteoarthritis. Most commonly, it is the weight-bearing joints that are affected, including: knees – sometimes due to an old injury; hips – older people are most at risk; spine – in the neck or lower back; hands – usually the end finger joints.

Risk factors for osteoarthritis

The cause of osteoarthritis is unclear, but some risk factors have been identified. These include: being overweight or obese; family history of osteoarthritis; a previous injury, significant trauma or overuse of the joint.

Diagnosis of osteoarthritis

If you are experiencing joint pain, it is important to see your doctor for a diagnosis. Many different conditions can cause joint pain and they require different treatments.

Your doctor may request an x-ray of the painful joint(s) and work with you to come up with a plan to manage your symptoms. Sometimes, they may refer you to a specialist (rheumatologist or orthopaedic surgeon) if necessary.

Management of osteoarthritis

There is no cure for osteoarthritis, but the condition can be managed using exercise, weight loss, medications or surgery if necessary.



Osteoarthritis and exercise

Movement is a very important tool in the management of osteoarthritis. The right type of exercise can help to keep the joints mobile and maintain or improve function.

Movement is important as it can:

maximise the health of the cartilage; maintain joint movement; improve muscle strength.

Cartilage does not have a blood supply, so it relies on the synovial fluid moving in and out of the joint to nourish it and remove its wastes. Exercises that involve moving the joints through their range of movement will also help maintain flexibility that is otherwise lost as a result of the arthritis.

Pain associated with arthritis has a weakening effect on the surrounding muscles. However, by undertaking strengthening exercises, muscle weakness can be reversed. Strong muscles will support sore joints.

Talk to your doctor, physiotherapist or exercise physiologist about suitable exercises. A variety of exercise that promotes muscle strength, joint flexibility and support, and improved balance and coordination, is encouraged. Strength training lower limbs, walking, warm water exercise and tai chi may be suitable exercise programs.

Other ways to manage arthritis

Other techniques that can help in the management of osteoarthritis include: Education and self-management – find out about your condition. Arthritis and Osteoporosis Victoria can provide you with information; Weight management – controlling weight is important for those who are overweight and have osteoarthritis in weight-bearing joints.

Your doctor or dietitian may be able to advise you on safe weight loss strategies.

Medication – pain-relieving medications can help, as advised by your doctor.

Relaxation techniques – for example, muscle relaxation, meditation or visualisation – can help manage pain and the difficult emotions, such as anxiety, that are sometimes experienced by people with arthritis.

Support – seek support from others, including family, friends, work colleagues and health professionals. A support or self-help group may be another option.

Surgery – damaged joints can be replaced in cases of advanced osteoarthritis.

Patella taping, knee braces and orthotics – may be useful in the management of knee osteoarthritis. Seek advice from a physiotherapist or podiatrist.

Equipment that promotes independence – many specially designed aids and types of equipment are available to help people with painful joints. The design of this equipment, such as large-handled kitchen utensils, reduces the strain on the joints. For more information, speak to an occupational therapist.

Things to remember

Osteoarthritis is a breakdown of the cartilage inside a joint. People over 45 are more at risk, but younger people can be affected too.

Exercise is one of the best ways to manage osteoarthritis





Delicious Date 'n Coffee Cake

1 ¼ cups (200g) Pitted Dates
1 ½ tbsp of your favourite
Granulated Coffee
1 ¼ cups /310ml) Water
1 tsp Bicarb Soda
60g Butter
¾ cup Caster Sugar
2 Eggs
1 cup (150g) Self Raising Flour

Chocolate Glaze

150g Dark Cooking Chocolate, finely chopped
1/3 cup (80mls) thickened Cream
1 tbsp Golden Syrup

Preheat your oven to 180d C (160 fan-forced); Grease a deep 20cm round cake pan; line base and sides with baking paper.

Combine dates, coffee and the water in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from heat and stir in the Bicarb Soda. Allow to stand for 5 minutes, then blend or process the mixture until smooth.

Cream the butter and sugar until pale. Add the eggs, one at a time until just combined. Fold in the sifted flour and then the date mixture. Pour mixture into prepared cake pan.

Bake for 50 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out with moist crumbs attached. Cool cake in the pan for 15 minutes before turning, top side up, onto a wire rack to cool slightly.



Chocolate Glaze:

Stir ingredients in a small saucepan over low heat until smooth. Transfer the glaze to a small heatproof jug. Place the cake on you cake stand and slowly pour the glaze on top, allowing a little to drip down the sides.