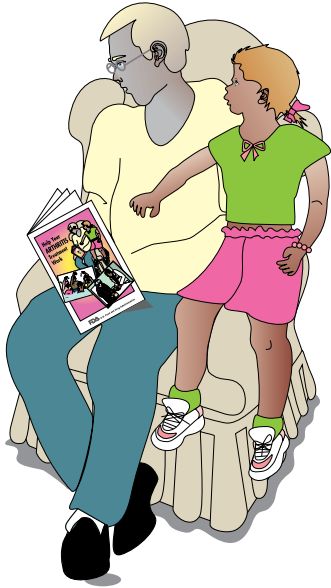


Quick Information for Your Health

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Help Your Arthritis Treatment Work



Ease The Pain, Help Prevent More Damage

Arthritis can strike at any age. It hurts the joints, where two bones meet. It damages the joints and makes them stiff and painful. Sometimes it's so bad it can cripple a person.

Correct treatment can ease the pain and help prevent more damage. You can help your treatment work.

If Your Joints Have Signs Of Arthritis, Talk To Your Doctor

If you have arthritis, the doctor may prescribe a medicine for you or tell you to use a medicine you buy without a prescription, such as aspirin. You may need to take more than one medicine.

Joints With Arthritis May Have:

- swelling
- warmth
- redness
- pain

Before Taking New Medicine, Ask Your Doctor:

- How should I take this medicine?
- Are there any special instructions?
- What side effects could there be?
- If I have any side effects, what should I do?
- What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

If you took the medicine before and it caused problems, tell the doctor.

Also tell the doctor if you are taking other medicines. And ask if you should keep taking them.



Read The Label Of Medicine You Buy Without A Prescription

Like arthritis medicine, many medicines for headaches or colds or flu have pain relievers in them.

Some common pain relievers are aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, ketoprofen, and naproxen.

So before you buy any medicine, read the label to see what's in it.

Does it have a pain reliever? If it does, ask your doctor or pharmacist if it's OK for you to take it.



Too much of the same type of medicine can hurt you.

Be Careful With Medicine

- Never take any medicine for arthritis without your doctor's advice.
- Never take someone else's medicine.
- Keep all medicine away from children.
- Throw out medicine that reaches its "Discard" or "Exp" (expiration) date.

Remember:

There can be problems with any medicine, even those you can buy without a prescription.

Rest And Exercise

You may need extra rest when your arthritis gets worse, or flares up. But even then, it's good to gently exercise the joints that hurt.

Gentle exercise can ease the pain and help you sleep better. Ask your doctor how to exercise your joints.



Learn About Your Arthritis

It helps to learn about your arthritis. Many people do this by joining a group with other people who have the disease.

To find a group, look in the newspaper. Or ask your doctor or the hospital. The local Arthritis Foundation office has information, too.

Watch Out For 'Cures' That Don't Work

Some people with arthritis can't find any treatment that helps very much. That's why there are so many ads for gadgets, health foods, and supplements to treat arthritis.

Many of these have never been tested. They're just a waste of money.

Protect Yourself With The Facts

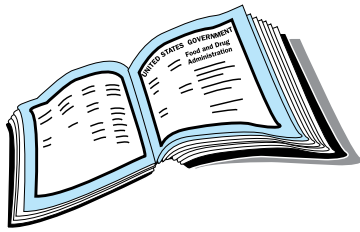
- Pain and stiffness often come and go by themselves, for no known reason. You may use an untested product and then feel better. But you may have felt better even without the product.
- There is no cure for arthritis. But correct treatment can ease pain and stiffness.
- If you use worthless products, you delay real help. So the damage gets worse.

Remember:

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't true.

What If Correct Treatment Doesn't Help?

If all else fails, an operation might help. Talk about this with your doctor.



Questions About An Arthritis Treatment?

Ask your doctor or other health care worker. And ask the FDA. There may be an FDA office near you. Look for the number in the blue pages of the phone book.

You can also call the FDA on its toll-free number, (888) INFO-FDA (463-6332).

Or look on the Internet at www.fda.gov

Or call the Arthritis Foundation's toll-free number, (800) 568-4045.

The Food and Drug Administration is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that makes sure medicines for arthritis and other illnesses work and are safe.

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