

LIVING MY BEST

HEALTHY LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS

How Nutrition can Help You Manage your Osteoarthritis

Bad news, good news. The bad news – there is no cure or dietary prevention for osteoarthritis. The good news? We can use our diet and lifestyle to manage our osteoarthritis-related pain, improve joint function, and increase quality of life. Here are some simple tips for managing osteoarthritis with food and supplements.

Weight Management. Maintaining an appropriate weight, and losing weight if overweight, is the primary diet-related treatment in decreasing osteoarthritis pain. Excess weight puts added strain on the joints, so even a 10lb weight loss can decrease knee osteoarthritis pain 50% among overweight women. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and limited added sugars, salt, and saturated and trans fat can help weight management goals.

Get Active! Exercise and physical activity, when medically approved, can help not only with weight loss, but can improve joint range of motion. Activities such as walking, water aerobics, yoga, and leisure bike riding can make a difference in increasing daily activity.



Recommended Foods. No single nutrient will resolve osteoarthritis pain; however, certain nutrients may help manage symptoms. Diets adequate in vitamins C, D, E and beta carotene are a good idea. This includes lots of fruits and vegetables, such as bell peppers, strawberries, spinach, broccoli, carrots, and squash. Healthy nuts, including almonds, are also good in moderation.

In general, look to see that your plate has about one half vegetables, one quarter whole grains, and one quarter lean protein such as beans and lean meats.



Supplements. Unfortunately, osteoarthritis supplements are more baffling than ever, with growing claims and increasing products. Here are some tips to keep in mind with supplements: None slow the disease, but rather may help address the symptoms. The evidence is still sparse, with no current product having sufficient evidence to support its use. The placebo effect is strong, with some studies showing a 60% reduction in pain with a sugar pill! Finally, the relief may be minor, so it is helpful to approach supplements with realistic expectations. What we do know is that glucosamine (1,500 mg/day) and chondroitin (1,200 mg/day), taken together, seem more effective than when taken singularly, to provide a moderate reduction in

pain. Cosamin ASU (avocado/soybean unsaponifiables) shows promise but still awaits further research, and MSM (methylsulfonylmethane) currently lacks sufficient evidence.

Because of the plethora of supplements, it is important to shop wisely. Ask your doctor, dietitian, and/or pharmacist questions about their recommendations. Buy products from larger companies; they tend to have more quality control assurances. Costco's Kirkland brand is one

example of a higher quality supplement. Read labels to make sure manufacturers are not making unrealistic claims. Finally, try products one at a time so you are able to discern which ones are effective and which ones are not.

Use your diet and lifestyle to help you manage your osteoarthritis pain. You will not cure the disease, but you may find a higher quality of life which can make all the difference.



For further questions regarding nutrition for osteoarthritis, contact Kary Woodruff at The Orthopedic Specialty Hospital at 801-314-4038, or kary.woodruff@imail.org.


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