

It is the mission of Compassionate Care Home Health Services, Inc. to promote recovery and independence to those in need by providing the highest quality of compassionate care for each client in the comfort of their own home.

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States among individuals ages 18 and up. In fact, of all the people living in America today, 46 million have been diagnosed with some form of arthritis. While there are several types of arthritis, the two most common types are Rheumatoid and Osteoarthritis.

According to the Arthritis Foundation, 207,000 Michigan residents currently have Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). Rheumatoid Arthritis is a chronic disease that involves inflammation in the lining (synovium) of joints. It can lead to long-term joint damage, chronic pain, loss of function, and disability.

Rheumatoid Arthritis is a systemic disease and can spread to affect other organs in the body. RA is chronic and in most people, it never goes away. RA patients may experience flare-ups, but in many cases the disease can be treated effectively, especially if treatment is started early. Treatment can help to limit the degree of joint damage, thereby limiting the associated pain and loss of function.

The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis (OA). In fact, the Arthritis Foundation tells us that 470,000 Michigan residents currently have OA. That's more than double the number with RA.

Osteoarthritis is known as the 'wear-and-tear' kind of arthritis. OA is also a chronic condition. It involves breakdown of the joint's cartilage. Cartilage is the part of the joint that cushions the ends of the bones to allow easy movement of the joint. When the cartilage breaks down, the bones rub directly against each other, causing stiffness, pain, and loss of movement.

Unfortunately we don't have an effective cure for osteoarthritis. We do know, however that certain factors may increase your risk of getting OA: age, obesity, injury, overuse, and genetics.

Stages of Osteoarthritis:

1. Cartilage loses elasticity and is more easily damaged by injury or use.
2. As this cartilage wears or becomes damaged, it leads to changes in the underlying bone. The bone thickens and bony growths and/or cysts may develop in the joint area.
3. This leads to bits of bone or cartilage floating loosely in the joint space.
4. This, in turn, leads to further cartilage damage.

The joints most commonly affected by OA are the knees, hips, fingers, neck, and lower back.

Early diagnosis and treatment is the key to controlling OA. The goals of OA treatment plans include:

- Controlling the pain and other symptoms.
- Improving ability to function in daily activities.
- Slowing the progress of the disease.

Most OA treatment plans will include a combination of exercise, weight control, joint protection, physical and/or occupational therapy, medications, and/or surgery for severe cases.

For more information about arthritis, please visit the Arthritis Foundation's website, www.arthritis.org or call toll-free, 1-800-283-7800.



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