

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

What is arthritis?

Answer: Arthritis is a term that describes a group of diseases characterized by pain, stiffness, redness and swelling in the joints and, sometimes, other areas of the body. Arthritis symptoms can range from mild to severe. Left untreated, it can lead to serious and often permanent damage to these areas, as well as to loss of function and disability.

Resources

Related Link: [General](http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/what-is-arthritis) [http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/what-is-arthritis]

How do you get a diagnosis of arthritis? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Your doctor or rheumatologist can provide a diagnosis based on your medical history, physical examination and tests such as blood tests and x-rays.

Resources

Related Link: [Risk Factors](http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-risk-factors) [http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-risk-factors]

Related Link: [Signs of Arthritis](https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker) [https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker]

Related Link: [Symptom Checker](https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker) [https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker]

Related Link: [Newly Diagnosed](http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/stronger-together/newly-diagnosed/i-just-found-out-i-have-arthritis-what-now) [http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/stronger-together/newly-diagnosed/i-just-found-out-i-have-arthritis-what-now]

Who gets arthritis? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Arthritis can affect anyone at any point in their lives. However, genetics, age and lifestyle can all play a part in increasing your risk of developing arthritis. While many adults live with arthritis, it can also affect children.

Resources

Related Link: [The Truth About Arthritis](https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/what-is-arthritis/the-truth-about-arthritis) [https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/what-is-arthritis/the-truth-about-arthritis]

Is arthritis serious? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Arthritis is very serious. Left untreated, it can lead to major, and often permanent, damage to your joints, and in some cases your skin, organs and other areas of the body. Pain, fatigue, loss of function and disability are just a few symptoms people with arthritis may experience. Early diagnosis and treatment as well as lifestyle changes can help individuals manage some of these symptoms.

Resources

Related Link: [The Truth About Arthritis](https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/what-is-arthritis/the-truth-about-arthritis) [https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/what-is-arthritis/the-truth-about-arthritis]

Is there a cure for arthritis?

Answer: There is no cure for arthritis – YET – but there is hope. Researchers are steadily working towards a cure, and in the meantime, there are treatments and strategies available to help reduce the impact of arthritis.

Resources

Related Link: [Research](https://www.arthritis.ca/what-we-do/research) [https://www.arthritis.ca/what-we-do/research]

Can arthritis kill you?

Answer: While many forms of arthritis are not considered fatal, left untreated, some advanced forms of arthritis can eventually be deadly. It is very important to get a diagnosis and seek treatment early. It is also very important for people with arthritis to stay active and maintain a healthy diet to ensure other parts of the body stay healthy.

My child has just been diagnosed with arthritis, how can I help them?

Answer: There is a lot you can do to take control and actively manage your child's arthritis. Learning more about the disease is a key place to start. The Arthritis Society is a great resource for information, as well as initiatives such as the backpack program and arthritis summer camps for children with a confirmed diagnosis.

Resources

Related Link: [Childhood Arthritis](http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/childhood-arthritis) [http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/childhood-arthritis]

Related Link: [Support for Childhood Arthritis](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis]

Related Link: [Juvenile Arthritis – Kids Get It Too!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjJtJXkQnJ0) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjJtJXkQnJ0]

What is osteoarthritis?

Answer: Osteoarthritis (OA) occurs because of the body's failure to repair damaged joint tissues. While the joint damage can happen through the wear related to aging, it can also occur after an injury.

Resources

Related Link: [Osteoarthritis](http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/osteoarthritis) [http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/osteoarthritis]

What is rheumatoid arthritis? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an inflammatory disease that can affect more than one joint in the body. The body's immune system (which normally blocks infections) mistakenly attacks the lining of the joints.

Resources

Related Link: [Rheumatoid Arthritis](http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/rheumatoid-arthritis) [http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/rheumatoid-arthritis]

Related Link: [Rheumatoid Arthritis – Webinar](http://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/participate/find-an-event-near-you/events/webinars/rheumatoid-arthritis-2016-are-we-making-progre-(1)) [http://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/participate/find-an-event-near-you/events/webinars/rheumatoid-arthritis-2016-are-we-making-progre-(1)]

Medical Questions

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Can you/the Arthritis Society provide a diagnosis if I believe that I have arthritis?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Arthritis Society cannot provide a diagnosis for arthritis or medical advice. A general practitioner, whether your family doctor or at a walk-in clinic, can provide a diagnosis based on your medical history and tests.

Resources

Related Link: [Symptom Checker](https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker) [https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker]

Related Link: [Flourish's Relationships After Your Arthritis Diagnosis](https://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/stronger-together/relationships/relationships-after-your-arthritis-diagnosis) [https://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/stronger-together/relationships/relationships-after-your-arthritis-diagnosis]

Can you provide a second opinion if I am diagnosed with arthritis?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Arthritis Society cannot give a second opinion on your diagnosis. A general practitioner, whether your family doctor or at a walk-in clinic, will be able to discuss your diagnosis further.

Resources

Related Link: [Symptom Checker](https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker) [https://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/signs-of-arthritis/symptom-checker]

Related Link: [Access to Primary Care](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care]

Related Link: [Flourish's Relationships After Your Arthritis Diagnosis](https://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/stronger-together/relationships/relationships-after-your-arthritis-diagnosis) [https://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/stronger-together/relationships/relationships-after-your-arthritis-diagnosis]

Where does arthritis pain come from? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Most arthritis pain typically comes from one or more of these sources: inflammation, joint damage and pain sensitization.

Resources

Related Link: [Pain Management](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/pain-management) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/pain-management]

What is a rheumatologist?

Answer: A rheumatologist is a doctor that has had specialized training to treat inflammatory forms of arthritis and related conditions.

Resources

Related Link: [Your Treatment Team](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/your-treatment-team) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/your-treatment-team]

Related External Resource: [Canadian Rheumatology Association](https://rheum.ca/) [https://rheum.ca/]

Can you refer me to a rheumatologist?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Arthritis Society is not able to make referrals to, recommend or give feedback on any individual physician. If you need a referral to a rheumatologist, your family physician (or GP at a local walk-in clinic) should be able to help you. You may also connect with the College of Physicians and Surgeons in your province, or the Canadian Rheumatology Association.

Resources

Related Link: [Access to Primary Care](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care]

Related External Resource: [Canadian Rheumatology Association](https://rheum.ca/) [https://rheum.ca/]

I am a medical doctor. Can you refer patients to me?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Arthritis Society is not able to make referrals, recommend or give feedback to any individual physician. When patients ask to be referred to a physician we point them to the College of Physicians and Surgeons in their province.

Where can I find a doctor to go to?

Answer: The College of Physicians and Surgeons in your province maintains a list of family doctors in your area. A family doctor can then refer you to other medical professionals, such as a rheumatologist, dermatologist, and orthopedic surgeon.

Resources

Related Link: [Access to Primary Care](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care]

What kind of medication should I be taking?

Answer: With so many types of arthritis and medications, and because they can affect people differently, we cannot say what medication will work best for each person. Your family doctor or pharmacist is best able to make a recommendation.

Resources

Related Link: [Medications to Manage Arthritis Pain](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medications-to-manage-arthritis-pain) [http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medications-to-manage-arthritis-pain]

Related Link: [Medication Reference Guide](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide) [http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide]

Related Link: [Inflammatory Arthritis Medications Simplified \(Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqGo9qiHDZU) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqGo9qiHDZU]

I've tried my friend's arthritis medication and it's worked great for me – can I keep taking it?

Answer: The Arthritis Society does NOT recommend that you take medication prescribed to another person. If you are considering any medications or supplements, it's important to speak with your family doctor, as they know your medical history best. Keep in mind that what works for one person might not be best for another but do let your physician know what your experience with other medications has been.

Resources

Related Link: [Medication Reference Guide](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide) [http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide]

What non-prescription drugs will help with inflammation?

Answer: Everybody responds to medication differently, so it's important to talk to your pharmacist or physician about what medication is right for you. Some non-prescription drugs such as acetaminophen (ex. Tylenol), ibuprofen (ex. Advil), naproxen (ex. Aleve) or acetylsalicylic acid (ex. Aspirin) can be used to treat the pain and inflammation of arthritis, but may interact with your other medications.

Resources

Related Link: [Medications to Manage Arthritis Pain – Non Prescription Medications](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medications-to-manage-arthritis-pain) [http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medications-to-manage-arthritis-pain]

Related Link: [Anti-Inflammatory Medications](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/anti-inflammatory-medications) [http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/anti-inflammatory-medications]

Related Link: [NSAIDs](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide/medications/non-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs-(nsaids)) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide/medications/non-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs-(nsaids)]

What are NSAIDs and Coxibs? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are a class of medication used to treat the pain and inflammation of arthritis. A Coxib is an NSAID that has been designed to minimize the risk of stomach ulcers.

Resources

Related Link: [NSAIDs](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide/medications/non-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs-(nsaids)) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide/medications/non-steroidal-anti-inflammatory-drugs-(nsaids)]

What are biologics? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Biologics are large, complex biological compounds that are made by living cells—bacterial or yeast cells or cells obtained from plants or animals—rather than being manufactured chemically like most other drugs. For people coping with inflammatory arthritis, biologics work by calming the immune system to reduce pain, stiffness and other symptoms.

Resources

Related Link: [Biologics](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologic) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologic]

Related Link: [Biologics and Biosimilars](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologics-and-biosimilars) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologics-and-biosimilars]

What are biosimilars? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Biosimilars are biologics produced by manufacturers after the patent on an original biologic expires. Because biologics are very complex molecules produced using living cells it is not possible to duplicate them exactly. For this reason, different versions of the same biologic are called biosimilars, because they are very similar (but not identical) to the original biologic.

Resources

Related Link: [Biologics](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologic) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologic]

Related Link: [Biologics and Biosimilars](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologics-and-biosimilars) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologics-and-biosimilars]

What are the side effects of biologics?

Answer: Since biologics suppress the immune system, treatment means you are more sensitive to infection. Headaches occur more commonly in patients taking biologics, as well as nausea. It is best to talk to your doctor or pharmacist to learn about the specific side effects of medications you are taking or considering. [Source: [The Arthritis Foundation](#)]

Resources

Related Link: [Medication Reference Guide – Biologics](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide?aliaspath=%2fTreatment%2fMedication%2fMedication-Reference-Guide&drugclass=0fe553a6-2f85-4dc7-8b75-392e2a0b9f4a)
[https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide?aliaspath=%2fTreatment%2fMedication%2fMedication-Reference-Guide&drugclass=0fe553a6-2f85-4dc7-8b75-392e2a0b9f4a]

Related Link: [Biologics](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologic) [http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/biologic]

How can steroid injections help with my arthritis? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Steroid injections are used to help relieve the pain and swelling for many types of arthritis. Most injections have a full effect in 24 to 48 hours, and resting the joint during this time may improve the effect. Some patients can feel better for months while others find only a few days of relief. It's important to consult your general physician about how steroid injections can impact you specifically.

Resources

Related Link: [Steroid Injections](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide/medications/steroid-injection) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medication-reference-guide/medications/steroid-injection]

Can surgery give me arthritis?

Answer: Like all medical interventions, surgery comes with certain risks and benefits. In many cases, surgery is only considered if other forms of therapy aren't working. Different types of surgery may influence arthritis risk differently. It's important to consult your general physician or surgeon about how surgery can impact you specifically. [Sources: [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)]

Resources

Related Link: [Surgery](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/surgery) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/surgery]

How do I prepare for hip or knee surgery?

Answer: The best way to prepare for hip or knee surgery is by putting a plan in place for both before and after your operation. Before the surgery, you can strengthen your legs by walking regularly or following your surgeon's exercise recommendations. After the surgery, your house or apartment may need certain changes such as rearranging your furniture to move with a cane or walker, and adding a toilet seat and shower chair to your bathroom.

Resources

Related Link: [Hip Replacement Surgery](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/surgery/hip-replacement-surgery) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/surgery/hip-replacement-surgery]

Related Link: [Knee Replacement Surgery](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/surgery/knee-replacement-surgery) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/surgery/knee-replacement-surgery]

Can the weather make my arthritis pain worse?

Answer: Many people living with arthritis will tell you that they can predict the weather based on their level of joint pain. And there's something to it: studies suggest that changes in weather factors may increase pain. There are over 100 different kinds of arthritis – and some people report this change in pain more than others. Keeping track of how your body feels day-to-day is key to helping you manage your arthritis.

How can I get medical cannabis legally?

Answer: In Canada, the only legal source of medical cannabis products is from a licensed producer. A list of licensed producers is on the Government of Canada's website.

Resources

Related Link: [Medical Cannabis – A Guide to Access](https://arthritis.ca/getmedia/1148862d-d223-4a78-9b06-483532041d2c/Medical-Cannabis-Brochure-2018-EN-WR.pdf) (Brochure) [https://arthritis.ca/getmedia/1148862d-d223-4a78-9b06-483532041d2c/Medical-Cannabis-Brochure-2018-EN-WR.pdf]

Related Link: [Impact of Cannabis Legalization for Patient](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medical-cannabis/impact-of-cannabis-legalization-for-patient)
[http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medical-cannabis/impact-of-cannabis-legalization-for-patient]

Related Link: [Accessing medical cannabis for arthritis \(Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06lv6R0DePo)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06lv6R0DePo]

Related External Resource: [Government of Canada’s Cannabis for medical purposes](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/topics/cannabis-for-medical-purposes.html)
[https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/topics/cannabis-for-medical-purposes.html]

Related External Resource: [Government of Canada’s List of Licensed Producers](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/licensed-producers/authorized-licensed-producers-medical-purposes.html)
[https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/licensed-producers/authorized-licensed-producers-medical-purposes.html]

How do I pay for medical cannabis? Is it covered by insurance? How much does it cost? EDITED FROM BROCHURE
([LINK](#))

Answer: If you have private health insurance, you can ask if your provider covers the costs for medical cannabis. If you do not have private insurance, you will need to cover the costs yourself like other medical expenses, and claim this cost on your personal tax return. The price is not regulated, but generally, it ranges between \$5 and \$12 per gram.

Resources

Related Link: [Medical Cannabis – A Guide to Access](https://arthritis.ca/getmedia/1148862d-d223-4a78-9b06-483532041d2c/Medical-Cannabis-Brochure-2018-EN-WR.pdf) (Brochure) [https://arthritis.ca/getmedia/1148862d-d223-4a78-9b06-483532041d2c/Medical-Cannabis-Brochure-2018-EN-WR.pdf]

Related Link: [Impact of Cannabis Legalization for Patient](http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medical-cannabis/impact-of-cannabis-legalization-for-patient)
[http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medical-cannabis/impact-of-cannabis-legalization-for-patient]

I previously accessed cannabis through the Marijuana Medical Access Regulations (MMAR), how are the new regulations different? EDITED FROM BROCHURE ([LINK](#))

Answer: The Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR) only allows access to medical cannabis through licensed producers. If you have an MMAR Authorization to Possess (ATP) card, you can approach a licensed producer to provide you with new documentation that will be valid

until the same date on your current card. Once you transfer under the new regulations, you cannot go back to access using the former regulations.

Resources

Related Link: [Medical Cannabis – A Guide to Access](#) (Brochure)

[<https://arthritis.ca/getmedia/1148862d-d223-4a78-9b06-483532041d2c/Medical-Cannabis-Brochure-2018-EN-WR.pdf>]

How will the legalization of recreational cannabis affect medical cannabis patients? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: If you're already using medical cannabis from a licensed producer under the Access to Cannabis for Medical Purposes Regulations (ACMPR), most of that remains the same. You still need a medical document signed by a physician and still access your supply from Canada's Licensed Producers. It's important to note that your rights as a patient (including possession and where it can be used) are only protected as long as your supply is through the ACMPR process.

Resources

Related Link: [Impact of Cannabis Legalization for Patient](#)

[<http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medical-cannabis/impact-of-cannabis-legalization-for-patient>]

Self-Management

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What can I do to help manage my pain from arthritis?

Answer: No one knows your pain as well as you. Strategies to help you manage your arthritis may work differently based on the type of pain, or the type of arthritis you have. Short-term pain relief strategies include heat, cold, visualization, distraction, massage, acupuncture and TENS therapy. Long-term pain management strategies include physical activity, posture, meditation and surgery. Physical therapy and joint protection are also important.

Resources

Related Link: [Pain Management](#) [<https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/pain-management>]

Related Link: [Medications to Manage Arthritis Pain](#)

[<http://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/medication/medications-to-manage-arthritis-pain>]

Related Link: [Managing Chronic Pain](https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/managing-chronic-pain) (Education Module) [https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/managing-chronic-pain]

What types of exercise can I do if I have arthritis?

Answer: While there is not one ideal type of exercise for arthritis, sticking to moderate-intensity exercise that improves your mood and flexibility leads to less pain. Remember to gently warm up and cool down, be mindful of your range of motion, and stop movement if you have moderate to severe pain. And if you consistently have more joint pain two hours after you work out, change the intensity and ease up next time.

Resources

Related Link: [Top 10 Exercises](http://www.arthritis.ca/AS/media/pdf/Living Well/Top-10-Exercises-EN.pdf) [http://www.arthritis.ca/AS/media/pdf/Living Well/Top-10-Exercises-EN.pdf]

Related Link: [Flourish's Starting Fitness](http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/exercise-motion/starting-fitness) [http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/exercise-motion/starting-fitness]

Related Link: [Flourish's Exercise Mix](http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/exercise-motion/the-right-exercise-mix) [http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/exercise-motion/the-right-exercise-mix]

Related Link: [Managing Physical Activity with Inflammatory Arthritis](http://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/participate/find-an-event-near-you/events/webinars/managing-physical-activity-with-inflammatory-a-(1)) (Webinar) [http://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/participate/find-an-event-near-you/events/webinars/managing-physical-activity-with-inflammatory-a-(1)]

Where can I find group physical activities at reduced prices?

Answer: Your local community and senior centres may have physical activity classes available for free or at reduced prices. Many yoga studios often have reduced-rate or pay-what-you-can community classes during the week as well. If you enjoy walking or running, find out if there are any free walking groups or running clubs in your community.

What kinds of food should I eat if I have arthritis?

Answer: There isn't a one-size-fits-all diet, but there are trends depending on your type of arthritis. People with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) usually benefit from eating foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, and may struggle with symptoms if they're underweight. People with gout reduce their risk of flares by limiting red meat and alcohol. A pharmacist and a registered dietitian can make suggestions about what foods you should be eating.

Resources

Related Link: [Eating Well](https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/eating-well) (Online Module) [https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/eating-well]

Related Link: [Flourish's Good Food Guide](http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/eating-well/your-good-food-guide) [http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/eating-well/your-good-food-guide]

Related Link: [The Arthritis-Friendly Home: Meals Made Easy \(Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZoCglpzwmM) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZoCglpzwmM]

What foods should I avoid if I have arthritis?

Answer: There isn't a one-size-fits-all diet but generally, limiting sugar, saturated and trans fat in processed foods can help your overall health. Certain conditions such as gout have specific dietary limitations. A pharmacist and a registered dietitian can make suggestions about what foods to avoid based on your diagnosis and condition. [Source: [The Arthritis Foundation](#)]

Resources

Related Link: [Eating Well](https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/eating-well) (Online Module) [https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/eating-well]

Related Link: [Flourish's Good Food Guide](http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/eating-well/your-good-food-guide) [http://www.arthritis.ca/living-well/optimized-self/eating-well/your-good-food-guide]

What are the benefits of a gluten-free diet for people living with arthritis?

Answer: Several types of arthritis, such as rheumatoid, increase the likelihood of celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder where eating gluten leads to damage of the small intestine. As a gluten-free diet is the only treatment for celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, some people with this condition find that eliminating gluten from their diet helps with their arthritis symptoms. At this point, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that a gluten-free diet holds any special benefit for people with arthritis who do not also have celiac disease. [Sources: [Arthritis Research UK](#), [Celiac Disease Foundation \(1, 2\)](#), [Arthritis Foundation](#)]

Resources

Related External Resource: [The Arthritis Foundation's Connection Between Gluten and Arthritis](https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/arthritis-diet/anti-inflammatory/gluten-free-diet.php) [https://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/arthritis-diet/anti-inflammatory/gluten-free-diet.php]

Related External Resource: [The Celiac Disease Foundation's Celiac Disease Symptoms](https://celiac.org/celiac-disease/understanding-celiac-disease-2/celiacdiseasesymptoms/) [https://celiac.org/celiac-disease/understanding-celiac-disease-2/celiacdiseasesymptoms/]

Does eating dairy make my osteoarthritis worse?

Answer: Unfortunately, research on the effects of dairy on arthritis is conflicting. However, nutrients commonly found in dairy products, such as calcium, are essential in preventing osteoporosis. A registered dietitian can make suggestions about what foods to avoid.

What types of complementary or alternative therapy help with arthritis?

Answer: Popular options for many people with arthritis include massage therapy, supplements, acupuncture and meditation. Also, while herbal supplements may not require a prescription, they still have medicinal properties. Make sure to consult with a pharmacist or your health care provider before starting any new herbal treatments or complementary therapy.

Resources

Related Link: [Complementary Therapies](https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/complementary-therapies) [https://www.arthritis.ca/treatment/complementary-therapies]

Related External Resource: [National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health](https://nccih.nih.gov/) [https://nccih.nih.gov/]

Can I get financial help to treat my arthritis?

Answer: Depending on your provincial and private health insurance, the out-of-pocket costs for people living with arthritis can vary. Other options provided by your province may include compassionate programs and exceptional access/special-access programs that help with prescription drug costs. Some non-medical programs offered by the Arthritis Society are available at no cost.

Resources

Related Link: [Access to Medications](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-medication) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-medication]

Related Link: [Access to Primary Care](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/access-to-primary-care]

Related Link: [Care Options](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/care-options) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/navigating-through-arthritis/care-options]

Related Link: [Navigating Your Healthcare – Health Insurance Plans \(Education Module\)](https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/navigating-your-healthcare) [https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/navigating-your-healthcare]

Am I eligible for disability benefits for my arthritis?

Answer: Depending on the impact arthritis has on your day-to-day life, you or a loved one may be eligible for disability benefits. The government offers income tax credits for eligible patients, as well as

child disability benefits and education funding for children with arthritis. Most programs require a physician's validation, so it is important to talk to your doctor about what options to pursue.

Resources

Related External Resource: [Government of Canada's Disability benefits](#)

[<https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/living-disability/disability-benefits.html>]

Related External Resource: [Government of Canada's Disability-Related Information 2017](#)

[<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/cra-arc/formspubs/pub/rc4064/rc4064-17e.pdf>]

What types of assistive walking devices are there?

Answer: Examples of assistive walking devices include canes, manual or power wheelchairs, walkers and positioning devices. [Source: [Government of Ontario](#)]

Resources

Related Link: [Daily Living](#) (Education Module) [<https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/daily-living>]

Related Link: [Assistive Devices to Help Manage Daily Life](#) [<https://arthritis.ca/living-well/forward-living/arthri-tips/top-tools-assistive-devices-to-help-manage-daily-life-with-arthritis>]

Where can I buy an assistive device?

Answer: Some online stores for arthritis-friendly products include <http://www.arthritisupplies.com>, <http://www.aidsforarthritis.com/catalog/index.html> and <http://www.amazon.ca>. Note that this is not an endorsement or certification of particular products or manufacturers. You should discuss your needs and possible solutions with a member of your health care team.

Resources

Related External Resource: [March of Dimes Assistive Devices Program](#)

[<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/EN/programs/adp/Pages/Adp.aspx>]

My child suffers from childhood arthritis and their teacher doesn't understand. What do I do?

Answer: Unfortunately, many people mistakenly think arthritis is just a disease of the elderly. Sharing your child's condition and treatment program, limitations, strengths and special needs can help dispel this myth and help them to understand and work towards improving accommodations in the classroom. Share this information with the administration at the school as well, so they can assist your child's teacher in creating a supportive environment for your child's learning.

Resources

Related Link: [Childhood Arthritis](http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/childhood-arthritis) [http://www.arthritis.ca/about-arthritis/arthritis-types-(a-z)/types/childhood-arthritis]

Related Link: [Support for Childhood Arthritis](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis]

Related Link: [Juvenile Arthritis – Kids Get It Too!](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjJtJXkQnJ0) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjJtJXkQnJ0]

Will I still be able to work?

Answer: While there's no one-size-fits-all approach, there are some changes you can make to improve your ability to work with arthritis. Your treatment plan needs to take your work life into account; plan ahead and talk to an expert. Evaluate your energy and try an assistive tool for manageability.

Resources

Related Link: [Joint Matters at Work](https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/joint-matters-at-work) (Education Module) [https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/joint-matters-at-work]

Related Link: [Flourish's Workplace](#)

I'm having trouble keeping/finding employment due to my arthritis. What other income sources are available?

Answer: When you're having trouble at the workplace due to your arthritis, it is important to consider speaking to your employer about accommodations to your position. If you can't continue working, speaking with your family doctor about the possibility of disability benefits or private programs is an option.

The Arthritis Society's Role

I was just diagnosed with arthritis; how can you help me?

Answer: The Infoline can help direct you to the answers you need. We have information on arthritis, resources near you and programs offered by the Arthritis Society to help manage your disease.

Resources

Related Link: [The Arthritis Society – What We Do](http://www.arthritis.ca/what-we-do) [http://www.arthritis.ca/what-we-do]

Does the Arthritis Society give financial aid to people living with arthritis for medical expenses?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Arthritis Society does not have the resources to assist with financial aid. You can speak to your private insurance provider or provincial health care office for coverage on arthritis medication and devices.

Do you offer workshops to help with the pain from arthritis?

Answer: Yes, we offer a range of workshops to help manage the pain from arthritis. Program availability varies by region. Our education event calendar can be found online at www.arthritis.ca.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community]

Do you have hand splints? Where can I buy hand splints?

Answer: The Arthritis Society currently does not offer hand splints, but they can be purchased online or at most major stores. An occupational therapist can help you best adapt hand splints to your health needs.

Resources

Related Link: [Daily Living](https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/daily-living) (Education Module) [https://arthritis.ca/support-education/online-learning/daily-living]

Do you offer workshops on Tai Chi or Yoga?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Arthritis Society does not provide Tai Chi or Yoga classes, but we can help direct you to options within your community.

Note that while programs such as Tai Chi or Yoga may be beneficial for your mobility when carefully supervised, they can pose risks as well. As always, discuss your physical activity options with your health care team, and make sure to inform your instructor about any mobility limitations you may have (ex. If you have compromised joints in your hands, wrists, arms or shoulders, a standard yoga position such as “Upward Dog” can put undue stress on your joints).

Resources

Related Link: [Yoga for Rheumatoid Arthritis \(Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBjo-bO-3pw) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBjo-bO-3pw]

Can I make a donation to the Arthritis Society?

Answer: Yes, there are many ways to give to the Arthritis Society. We accept donations through our Donor Services line, mail or online.

Resources

Related Link: [Ways to Give](https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/ways-to-give) [https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/ways-to-give]

Can I donate my used wheelchair to the Arthritis Society?

Answer: Unfortunately, the Arthritis Society does not accept equipment donations. We do however accept donations to our Donor Services office through phone, mail or online.

Resources

Related Link: [Ways to Give](https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/ways-to-give) [https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/ways-to-give]

How does the Arthritis Society fund research?

Answer: The Arthritis Society is Canada's largest charitable source of investment in arthritis research, providing research grants and training awards to scientists and clinicians across the country. Through our grant review process, we invite talented researchers to submit their research proposals for consideration by a panel of subject matter experts in discovery research and clinical care, as well as people who have lived experience with arthritis.

Resources

Related Link: [Research Strategy](https://www.arthritis.ca/researchers/research-programs/research-strategy) [https://www.arthritis.ca/researchers/research-programs/research-strategy]

Related Link: [Research Grants and Awards](https://www.arthritis.ca/researchers/research-programs/research-grants-awards) [https://www.arthritis.ca/researchers/research-programs/research-grants-awards]

Related Link: [Get Involved in Research](https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/get-involved-in-research) [https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/get-involved-in-research]

What portion of the money to the Arthritis Society goes towards research and education?

Answer: In 2017-18, from the funds the Arthritis Society raises, 54% went to our mission (which includes research, education, advocacy and awareness-building efforts), 34% towards fundraising efforts, 10% to administration costs and 2% to building operations.

Resources

Related Link: [Finances and Annual Reports](https://www.arthritis.ca/about-us/finances-annual-reports) [https://www.arthritis.ca/about-us/finances-annual-reports]

What is your annual walk?

Answer: The Walk for Arthritis is a one-day event held across Canada that brings the arthritis community together and raises funds for the more than 6 million Canadians affected by arthritis. Since its beginning, the Walk for Arthritis has raised over \$10 million!

Resources

Related Link: [About the Walk](#)

[http://tascad.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=WalkforArthritis_AboutTheWalk]

How can I volunteer with the Arthritis Society?

Answer: Fill out a Volunteer Application Form online or in-person so that we can find more about you and how you want to get involved. We will then contact you to talk further about what opportunities may be right for you. Volunteer positions are based on the needs of the regional offices. You do not have to have arthritis or know someone with arthritis to get involved!

Resources

Related Link: [Volunteer Application Form](#) [<https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/volunteer/apply>]

Related Link: [Volunteer](#) [<https://www.arthritis.ca/get-involved/volunteer>]

National/Regional Programs

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NATIONAL

What is the backpack program? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: The program delivers a backpack filled with information and tools to families of schoolchildren who have arthritis, helping them lead healthier, more fulfilling lives. Each backpack has broad straps, padding, and waist support to minimize strain on the vulnerable joints of young people with arthritis. Each backpack also includes an instructional video for parents and caregivers, an awareness video for teachers, a teddy bear with warming and cooling packs, pencil grips, a book and a pamphlet. Families of children diagnosed with arthritis can receive a backpack voucher from their pediatric rheumatologists and rheumatology clinics across Canada.

Resources

Related Link: [Childhood Arthritis – Backpack Program](#) [<https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis>]

Related Link: [How to properly fit and use a backpack when a child lives with arthritis \(Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6zP2ZPgaJ8)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6zP2ZPgaJ8]

Do you have camps available for my child? EDITED FROM WEBSITE ([LINK](#))

Answer: Yes, our camps provide barrier-free, traditional camp activities as well as important tools and resources for positive self-esteem and effective disease management. Our experienced counselors and on-site medical staff ensure that campers' health needs are met.

Resources

Related Link: [Childhood Arthritis – Arthritis Camps](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-for-childhood-arthritis]

ONTARIO

Do you offer occupational therapy? Physiotherapy? Social counselling? How much does the service cost?

Answer: The Arthritis Society offers occupational therapy, physiotherapy and counselling from social workers through the Arthritis Rehabilitation and Education Program (AREP), which is offered in Ontario only. It is free of charge to those with an Ontario health card.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community - AREP](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community/arthritis-rehabilitation-and-education-program) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community/arthritis-rehabilitation-and-education-program]

What is the Arthritis Rehabilitation and Education Program (AREP)?

Answer: Through AREP, the Arthritis Society provides a range of services for children and adults living with arthritis in Ontario. Services include client-centred rehabilitation services, counselling, guidance on arthritis management in the home, workplace and community, and individual and group education sessions.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community - AREP](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community/arthritis-rehabilitation-and-education-program) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community/arthritis-rehabilitation-and-education-program]

Does the Arthritis Society make house calls?

Answer: The Arthritis Society does, on occasion, provide home visits for the Arthritis Rehabilitation and Education Program [Ontario only]. This depends on the needs of the person and the resources available.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community - AREP](https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community/arthritis-rehabilitation-and-education-program) [https://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community/arthritis-rehabilitation-and-education-program]

Where can I find a salt-water pool to help manage my pain from arthritis?

Answer: The availability of salt-water pools varies by region, but is a popular option for those living with arthritis. [Refer to salt water pool locations depending on caller's region]

Resources

Related Link: [Aquatic Therapy Exercises for Osteoarthritis \(Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpILOvAkoSM) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpILOvAkoSM]

QUEBEC

What is Hand in Hand/Aide entrAide?

Answer: Hand in Hand is a support program that helps families living with childhood arthritis as well as teenagers and adults. By making an appointment or dropping by the outpatient clinic of a participating hospital, patients can access support, active listening and information through program staff. Support through workshops, presentations and social settings encourages people to play an active role in the management of their disease. Hand in Hand is offered in Montreal, Québec City, Lévis (adult stream), Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community – Quebec](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community]

What is the Arthritis Forum?

Answer: The Arthritis Forum is an annual event held in Quebec, aimed at improving quality of life for people affected by arthritis. Through its wide range of seminars, interactive workshops and an exhibitor fair, the forum offers great opportunities to learn and connect with others affected by rheumatic diseases.

Resources

Related Link: [Forum Arthritis](https://forumarthritis.ca/) [https://forumarthritis.ca/], [Rencontre arthrite](https://www.rencontrearthrite.ca/) [https://www.rencontrearthrite.ca/]

Are there workshops in my community where I can go to learn more?

Answer: Introduction to Arthritis is a single one-hour workshop that provides basic information to organizations or support groups on the main types of arthritis, on how to recognize the disease and how to cope with it. The workshop is offered at a minimal cost and is led by trained volunteer facilitators.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community – Quebec](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community]

Related Link: [Support in Quebec – Guide](http://www.arthritis.ca/getattachment/Support-Services/Support-in-Your-Community/2014-Resource-Guide.pdf) [http://www.arthritis.ca/getattachment/Support-Services/Support-in-Your-Community/2014-Resource-Guide.pdf]

MANITOBA

Where can I access aqua-therapy?

Answer: The City of Winnipeg offers a variety of programs for people with arthritis through the Arthritis Land and Water Exercise Programs.

Resources

Related Link: [Aquatic Therapy Exercises for Osteoarthritis \(Video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpILOvAkoSM) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpILOvAkoSM]

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Are there any support groups I can be a part of?

Answer: The Arthritis Social Crew is a casual, fun group that meets monthly in the Greater Vancouver area. We have geared this group towards young adults between 18 and 30ish who deal with the daily effects of the many forms of arthritis, lupus or fibromyalgia. Hang Tough meets on the first non-holiday Monday of the month in Port Coquitlam. The Richmond Arthritis group has monthly meetings for remedial strategies and suggestions.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community – B.C.](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community) [http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community]

What is the Mary Pack Program?

Answer: The Mary Pack Arthritis Program provides treatment services for thousands of children and adults living with arthritis in British Columbia. Referral is usually by family physicians and specialists and resources include a range of treatment and education services and interdisciplinary team programs.

Resources

Related Link: [Support in Your Community – B.C.](http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community) [<http://www.arthritis.ca/support-education/support-in-your-community>]

Glossary

*Note: The following is a **condensed** list of Info Line and common arthritis terminology. Definitions of the types of arthritis are not included but can be found at www.arthritis.ca.*

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Active listening | To fully concentrate on the speaker and try to understand what they are saying. |
| Analgesic | A type of medication to treat pain. |
| Autoimmune disease | A disease where the body’s immune system (that naturally defends from infections) attacks itself instead. |
| Biologics | Complex biological compounds made by living cells to calm the immune system. They lead to reduced pain, stiffness and other symptoms for people with inflammatory arthritis. |
| Cannabinoid | A name for the molecules that make up the active ingredients in cannabis. |
| Cartilage | Smooth tissue that covers the ends of the bones so that the joint can move smoothly and without pain. |
| Collaboration | Working with someone to produce or create something. |
| Corticosteroids | A group of medications to reduce inflammation. |
| DMARDs | Disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs are a class of medications to treat inflammatory types of arthritis. |
| Empathy | Entering the world and feelings of another person to better understand them. |
| Formulary | A list of prescription medication or products that are covered under a public or private insurance plan. |
| Giving information | Answering a question with basic and verified information. |
| Inflammation | The body’s reaction to certain signals. Results in redness, swelling, heat, pain and loss of function. |
| Licensed producer | A producer authorized by health Canada to sell cannabis in Canada for medicinal purposes. |
| Ligament | A band that runs along either side of a joint to stabilize and hold it together. |
| NSAIDs | Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are a class of medications used to treat the pain and inflammation of arthritis. |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Occupational therapist | A health care professional who evaluates the living and working environment on disease. |
| Operator | Any staff or volunteer that responds to callers through the Info Line. |
| Orthopedic | A branch of medicine that aims to correct problems in the bone or muscle. |
| Physiotherapist | A health care professional who helps patients with movement and exercise after a decrease in physical function. |
| Redirecting | Suggesting another resource to the caller that is better able to answer the question. |
| Referral | Making a connection between the caller and another resource by communicating information for an introduction. |
| Rheumatologist | A medical doctor who has specialized in treating rheumatic diseases. They have trained at universities with arthritis centres. |
| Social worker | A professional who helps individuals participate in society to their fullest capabilities. |
| Uric acid | A compound that occurs when the body breaks down chemicals found in our cells or high-protein food. It can lead to gout when it builds up in the joints. |
| Viscosupplementation | Injections of fluid into the joint to help relieve arthritis symptoms. |

Key Community Contacts

| | |
|---|--|
| Arthritis Alliance of Canada | The Arthritis Alliance of Canada brings together arthritis health care professionals, researchers and more to provide a central focus for arthritis-related initiatives. Phone: 416-979-2564 |
| Canadian Psoriasis Network | The Canadian Psoriasis Network has online and in-person support resource for those dealing with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Phone: 1-888-859-9662 Email: executivedirector@cpn-rcp.com |
| Canadian Spondylitis Association | The Canadian Spondylitis Association is a national non-profit that advocates for those suffering from spondyloarthritis diseases. Phone: 705-715-2162 Email: info@spondylitis.ca |
| Lupus Canada | Lupus Canada is a national voluntary organization dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by lupus. Phone: 1-800-661-1468 |
| Your Life Counts | Website that directs users to a crisis line in their region: http://www.yourlifecounts.org/need-help/crisis-lines |