

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

Osteoarthritis is a disease of the joints that results from worn cartilage and the growth of bone in the joint space. This bone growth is not normal and takes over the joint space, leaving the joint unable to move as it should. Osteoarthritis is a very common and painful condition.

Causes of the disease are the following:

- The introduction of damage to the joint through trauma or day to day activities
- Increasing age
- High-risk occupations
- Family history
- Obesity

The signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis include the following:

- Inability to move the joint as it once moved
- Local tenderness
- “Creaking” at the joint when it moves
- Shortening of the muscles that are affected around the joint
- Large joints from too much bone growth at the joint
- Pain at the joint

To help relieve pain and discomfort you can do the following:

- Rest
- Decrease the stress on joints- reduce repetitive motion of the joint and do not do those activities and actions that increase your pain
- Participate in Physical and/or Occupational therapy
- Take medications to reduce inflammation and swelling as prescribed and recommended by your doctor
- Lose weight
- Consider joint replacement surgery if joints are severely damaged

Notify your nurse or doctor if you experience the following symptoms:

- Increased or unbearable pain
- Decreased movement in joints
- Loss of function
- Signs of infection:
 - Warmth, unusual pain or tenderness of a joint
 - Temperature above 101 F

Adapted from *Clinical Pathways for the Multidisciplinary Home Care Team Volume 2*

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.
For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.