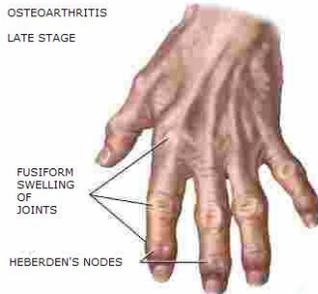


Arthritis

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What is Arthritis? Arthritis literally means "joint inflammation". that can cause pain, stiffness and swelling in the joints. Any part of the body can become inflamed or painful from arthritis.

According to Ayurveda, arthritis is caused primarily by an excess of ama and lack of agni, which means poor digestion and a weakened colon. Due to this the undigested food is accumulated and waste matter builds up which turns into toxins and problems with the colon allow the toxins to reach the joints.



Therefore, the simple way to treat arthritis is to stimulate the digestive fire (agni) and to suppress the ama.

Ayurveda divides arthritis into three categories corresponding to vata, pitta, and kapha. To treat this condition properly, it is vital to carefully diagnose which type of arthritis one has.

Types of Arthritis : There are over 100 forms of arthritis and rheumatism, some related to wear and tear (e.g. osteoarthritis) and those which are a result of an over-active immune system (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis). The most common forms of rheumatic disease are:

- **Osteoarthritis - this is the most common form of arthritis**
- **Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) - this is a type of inflammatory arthritis**
- **Gout - this is another type of inflammatory arthritis**
- **Fibromyalgia - this is a type of soft tissue rheumatism**
- **Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) or lupus**
- **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**
- **Juvenile arthritis**
- **Back pain - this is a common problem and can have a number of causes**

Causes : Determining the cause of arthritis can be difficult, because often several factors contribute to an individual developing this common problem. 5 percent of all cases of arthritis are gout. Some of the major causes are listed below :

Age: It's just a fact of life that the older one gets, the more likely one is to develop arthritis, especially osteoarthritis. Like the tires of the car, cartilage can wear down over time, becoming thin, cracked, or even wearing through. Bones may also break down with age, bringing on joint pain and dysfunction.

Heredity: Parents gives beautiful eyes, strong jaw line, exceptional math ability and, possibly, a tendency to develop rheumatoid arthritis. Scientists have discovered that the genetic marker HLA-DR4 is linked to rheumatoid arthritis; so, if one happen to have this gene, one is more likely to develop the disease. For example, ankylosing spondylitis is linked to the genetic marker HLA-B27, and although having this gene doesn't mean that one will absolutely get this form of arthritis, one can if conditions are right.

Overuse of a joint: What do ballerinas, baseball pitchers, and tennis players all have in common? A great chance that they'll develop arthritis due to the tremendous repetitive strain they put on their joints. The dancers, who go from flat foot to pointe hundreds of times during a practice session, eventually end up with painful, arthritic ankles. Baseball pitchers, throwing fastballs at speeds of more than 100 mph, regularly develop arthritis of the shoulder and/or

elbow. Moreover, one need not to be a tennis pro to develop tennis elbow, a form of tendonitis that has sidelined many a player.

Injury: Sustaining injury to a joint (from a household mishap, a car accident, playing sports, or doing anything else) increases the odds that one can develop arthritis in that joint. Football players are well-known victims of arthritis of the knee not only because of the overuse of the joint but injuries as well.

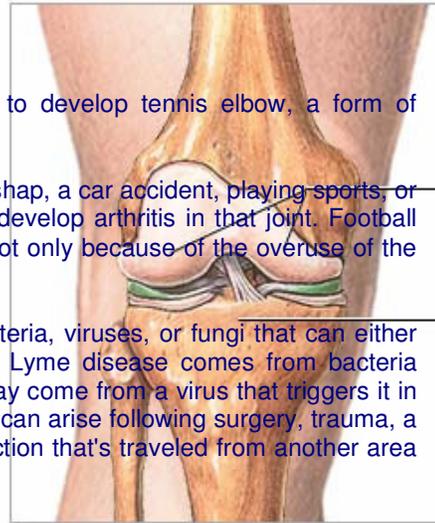
Infection: Some forms of arthritis are the result of bacteria, viruses, or fungi that can either cause the disease or trigger it in susceptible people. Lyme disease comes from bacteria transmitted by the bite of a tick. Rheumatoid arthritis may come from a virus that triggers it in people with a certain genetic marker. Infectious arthritis can arise following surgery, trauma, a needle inserted into the joint, bone infection, or an infection that's traveled from another area of the body.

Tumor necrosis factor: TNF is a substance the body produces that causes inflammation and may play a part in initiating or maintaining rheumatoid arthritis. Although scientists are unsure exactly what triggers rheumatoid arthritis, they have found that drugs that counteract the effects of TNF, called TNF antagonists, are often helpful in managing the symptoms of this disease

Symptoms: Pain with activities, Limited range of motion, Stiffness of the knee, A feeling the joint may "give out" , Deformity of the joint (knock-knees or bow-legs), Swelling in one or more joints, Stiffness around the joints that lasts for at least 1 hour in the early morning, Constant or recurring pain or tenderness in a joint, Difficulty using or moving a joint normally, Warmth and redness in a joint

Treatment : The disease is unpredictable and the treatment difficult. But today there are several medical remedies which can both ease the pain and slow down the spread of the disease and the damage it causes.

The medicine must be adjusted from time to time, which means it is important to visit the doctor regularly. The treatment of arthritis takes great experience, since it never develops in the same way from one person to the next. It often needs to be treated by a specialist. Surgery can be offered if permanent deformation of the joints develops despite medication and physiotherapy treatment.



Femoral condyles

Tibial plateau

In Ayurveda: General Treatment of Arthritis :

Depending on a person's lifestyle and diet, either vata, pitta, or kapha goes out of balance resulting into a particular dosha slowing down agni (digestive fire), and building up of toxins, sticky by-product of inadequate digestion known as ama.

Vata, the main active dosha, brings the ama into the colon, and from there it travels through the system and lodges in the bone tissue and in the joints, giving rise to the stiffness and pain characteristic of arthritis.

Ayurveda attempts to remove the ama from the joint and bring it back to the colon, and then to eliminate it. To do this, we need to keep the colon clean. It is best to determine the type of arthritis and manage it for the remedies recommended for the specific type. If you do not know whether the arthritis is vata, pitta, or kapha arthritis, take 1 teaspoon triphala at night with 1/2 to 1 cup warm water.

If you know positively which type it is, you can use the following (1/2 to 1 teaspoon with warm water):

Haritaki for vata-type arthritis : Amalaki for pitta-type : Bibbitaki for kapha-type arthritis

Detoxification Diet: A three- to five-day detoxification diet is often prescribed. Vegetables, juices, spices and herbs are taken during the fast, which lasts until the body shows signs that the digestive fire is burning strong. These signs include a return of the appetite, a feeling of lightness and a clear coating to the tongue.

Use of Enemas/ Cleaning Colon : Enemas and other means of cleaning the colon are often used to help detoxify the body.

Use of herbs, spices and bitters : A variety of herbs, spices and bitters are used in ayurveda. These are often applied externally or ingested. These are believed to cleanse the body and to relieve pain and stiffness. Mint, ephedra, golden seal, gentian, nirgundi, eucalyptus leaves, prasarini, quassia, coptis, scute, phellodendrom, aloe, guggul, du huo, ligusticum, Siberian ginseng, myrrh, and yucca are some of the herbs used.

Treating Vata-type arthritis

Diet: In addition to the general treatment, Vata-type arthritis responds well to a three- to five-day detoxification diet and an anti-vata diet. This diet includes warm, heavy and moist foods that give one strength.

Herbs: : Take yogaraj guggulu, 1 tablet 3 times per day. it cleanses bone tissue, strengthens bones, and improves flexibility.

Take 1/2 to 1 teaspoon Haritaki with warm water

Treating Pitta-type arthritis

Pitta arthritis often has more pain and inflammation associated with it than other types. In addition to the general treatment, Pitta-type arthritis responds well to a five- to seven-day detoxification diet and an anti-pitta diet. Specific herbs for Pitta arthritis include guggul, sandalwood, aloe, saffron and chaparral. Apply ice packs on the inflamed part to quell the "fire."

Diet : The anti-Pitta diet consists of cool, slightly dry, and heavy foods.

Useful Ayurvedic Herbal Formulas :

Take 1 tablet of kaishore guggulu (350 mg.) 3 times a day

1/2 teaspoon sudarsban twice a day, washed down with warm water.

Brahmi and sandalwood oils (mixed together) are very beneficial

Other useful herbs: Musta and nirgundi also helps relieve pain.

Treating Kapha-type arthritis

Arthritis is classified as kapha when the joint is painful, swollen, stiff, and feels cold and clammy to the touch.

Diet : In addition to the general treatment, Kapha-type arthritis responds well to a one- to two-week detoxification diet. The anti-kapha diet is light, dry and warm. Avoid cold, oily, and heavy foods.

Herbs : Pure guggul is best for this condition.

Punarnava guggulu tablets (250 mg.). Take 1 tablet 3 times a day.

Apply a paste of vacha (calamus root) powder externally to the joint. To make the paste, add sufficient warm water to 1 teaspoon of powder to make a paste.

If the joint fills with fluid, make an paste of equal amounts of punarnava powder and ginger powder. Mix 1 teaspoon of each with enough warm water to form a paste, and apply on the joint.

Hot herbs are also helpful, such as cinnamon, dry ginger, turmeric, trikatu.

Musta and nirgundi relieve pain.

Future prospects :

There is no standard treatment for arthritis. Some doctors may recommend a diet but there is no evidence that dietary changes alone can ease or stop the development of arthritis.

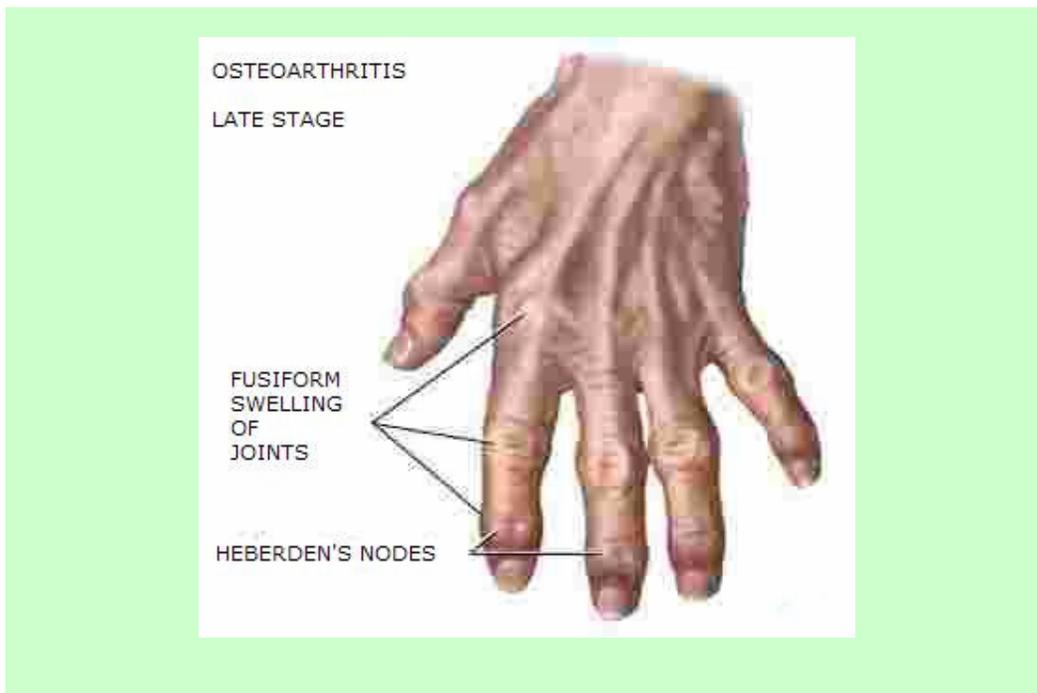
It is important for patients with arthritis to obtain help to keep the muscles and joints active and to be supported in leading a normal life. Physiotherapists who are trained to maintain a patient's physical ability and relieve pain, and occupational therapists who assess physical ability and provide help and advice including aids, play a large part in making life bearable for arthritis sufferers.

During recent years, there has been great progress in the treatment of arthritis particularly with the use of artificial joints. Some people still have to live with the discomfort of the disease as not all joints can be replaced surgically.

The modern medicine has also started admitting that Ayurveda and Herbal medicine, Yoga and Pranayam has a lot of positive influence on the treatment of Arthritis. Prevention is better than cure. Why not to start taking preventive care before this disease takes its own course and finds a victim in us?

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