



OSTEOARTHRITIS

Bromley

Well

HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated December 2025

What is Osteoarthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a long-term condition that causes joints to become painful and stiff. It is the most common type of arthritis in the UK. Osteoarthritis can affect any joint in the body but the most commonly affected joints are the knees, hips and small hand joints.



What are the symptoms?

Joint pain and stiffness are the main symptoms of osteoarthritis. Some people also experience swelling, tenderness and a grating or crackling sound when moving the affected joints.

SELF CARE TIPS

KEEP PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Exercise such as swimming and cycling are ideal as they don't put too much strain on your joints.

WEAR SUPPORTIVE FOOTWEAR

Wearing comfortable and supportive footwear helps to support joints throughout the lower body.

To register with Bromley Well:
Freephone 0808 278 7898
Or register online:
www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer

Contact Lifestyle Support direct
07985 431484 / 07985 444210
or email
enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk



What are the causes?

In osteoarthritis, the protective cartilage on the ends of your bones breaks down, causing pain, swelling and problems moving the joints. Bony growth can develop, and the area can become inflamed (red and swollen).

Although the exact cause of osteoarthritis is not known, several factors may increase the risk. These include:

- Joint injury – Overusing your joint when it has not had enough time to heal after an injury or operation.
- Other conditions – Osteoarthritis can occur in joints severely damaged by a previous or existing condition such as rheumatoid arthritis or gout.
- Age – Your risk of developing osteoarthritis increases as you age.
- Family History – Osteoarthritis may run in families.
- Being overweight – Being overweight puts excess strain on your joints, particularly those that bear most of your weight such as your knees and hips.

What about treatment?

Severe symptoms can be managed with treatments such as:

- Medication – to relieve your pain.
- A structured exercise plan carried out under the supervision of a physiotherapist.
- Surgery may be carried out if damage to joints is very severe.

SELF CARE TIPS

EAT A HEALTHY DIET

Eat a well-balanced diet, ensuring you eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. Maintaining a healthy weight can help to reduce strain on the joints. Some people find that certain foods trigger their osteoarthritis, so keeping a food diary can help. It also may be worth increasing your intake of anti-inflammatory food such as garlic, antioxidant rich berries, and more.



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Some myths

Myth 1: Osteoarthritis is just a normal part of the aging process

Not true. The risk of developing osteoarthritis does increase with age. However, as mentioned earlier, osteoarthritis is caused by cartilage breakdown. This can be caused by excess weight on joints, repetitive daily use from physical jobs or sports and injury. Therefore, not everyone will get osteoarthritis as they get older and some people may get it a lot earlier due to a lot of factors.



Myth 2: Pain indicates more damage is occurring

This is not the case. Unfortunately, pain can be brought on by a host of different factors: stress and other heightened emotions, bad sleep, and inflammation in your body from other sources. To help with pain you should try to rest without stopping all movement and activity completely. Often these flares will go with time.

SELF CARE TIPS

USE HOT AND COLD THERAPY TO HELP WITH PAIN

Using heat can help with relaxation and soothing pain in general. Some people also find that applying cold to areas of pain can help.

BE OPEN TO USING AIDS

There are a lot of aids out there that can make day-to-day life easier for those with osteoarthritis. Gadgets to help open jars, different size pens and other adapted utensils can all be discussed with an occupational therapist.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Versus arthritis

Help Line: 0800 5200 520

www.arthritis-uk.org/

A National charity providing information on the latest research into arthritis and tips and advice on managing the condition. Online support for people living with arthritis.

Arthritis Action

Help Line: 020 3781 7120/0800 652 3188

www.arthritisaction.org.uk/

A National charity offering healthy eating advice, physical therapies, exercise tips and pain management techniques.

NHS Conditions Arthritis

www.nhs.uk/conditions/arthritis/

NHS conditions pages contain information about the causes, symptoms and treatment of arthritis and advice for people living with the condition.

BDA fact sheet osteoarthritis

www.bda.uk.com/resource/rheumatoid-arthritis-diet.html

The Association of UK Dietitians food fact sheets containing diet advice for people living with arthritis and tips for managing the condition.

References: NHS conditions www.nhs.uk/conditions/osteoarthritis/symptoms/ NICE www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng226

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