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ARTHRITIS TYPES AND TREATMENT

Causes of Arthritis

Besides heredity, arthritic symptoms may arise in a number of ways:

- Through injuries, notably in athletes and industrial workers, especially if the injuries have been ignored (which injuries of the feet tend to be).
- Through bacterial and viral infections that strike the joints. The same organisms that are present in pneumonia, gonorrhea, staph infections, and Lyme disease cause the inflammations.
- In conjunction with bowel disorders such as colitis and ileitis, frequently resulting in arthritic conditions in the joints of the ankles and toes. Such inflammatory bowel diseases seem distant from arthritis, but treating them can relieve arthritic pain.
- Using drugs, both prescription drugs and illegal street drugs, can induce arthritis.
- As part of a congenital autoimmune disease syndrome of undetermined origin. Recent research has suggested, for instance, that a defective gene may play a role in osteoarthritis.



Arthritis is an inflammation and swelling of the cartilage and lining of the joints, generally accompanied by an increase of the fluids in the joints. It is a disabling and occasionally crippling disease afflicting over 50 million Americans. In some forms, it appears to be hereditary. Although the prevalence of arthritis increases with age, all people from infancy to middle age are potential victims. People over 50 are the primary targets. The month of May has been set aside as National Arthritis Awareness Month. It is a time to spread the message about prevention methods and treatment of arthritis. The following information is an overview of the symptoms and treatments of arthritic feet.

There is usually no need to endure years of painful ambulation because of arthritic feet. Most conditions can be diagnosed and treated either conservatively or surgically by your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrist.

Because each foot has 33 joints that can be afflicted - and there is no way to avoid the tremendous weight-bearing load on the feet - feet are very susceptible to arthritis. Arthritic feet can result in loss of mobility and independence. However, early diagnosis and proper medical care can limit or slow the damage.

Symptoms of arthritis in the foot and ankle include:

- Early morning stiffness
- Limitation in motion of joint
- Recurring pain or tenderness in any joint
- Redness or heat in a joint
- Skin changes, including rashes and growths
- Swelling in one or more joints

Forms of Arthritis

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It is frequently called *degenerative joint disease* or *wear and tear arthritis*. Aging usually brings on a breakdown in cartilage, and pain gets progressively more severe. Dull, throbbing nighttime pain is characteristic, and

may be accompanied by muscle weakness or deterioration. Many of these symptoms can be relieved with rest. Overweight people are particularly susceptible to osteoarthritis. The additional weight contributes to the deterioration of cartilage and the development of bone spurs.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a major crippling disorder and the most serious form of arthritis. It is a complex, chronic inflammatory group of diseases, often affecting more than a dozen smaller joints during its course. In the foot, it frequently affects both ankles and toes.

Other types of inflammatory arthritis include gout, lupus, ankylosing spondylitis and psoriatic arthritis.

Posttraumatic arthritis can develop after an injury to the foot or ankle. Dislocations and fractures—particularly those that damage the joint surface—are the most common injuries that lead to posttraumatic arthritis. Like osteoarthritis, posttraumatic arthritis causes the cartilage between the joints to wear away. It can develop many years after the initial injury.



Arthritis of the foot and ankle can be treated in many ways, including:

- Physical therapy and exercise
- Anti-inflammatory medication and/or steroid injections into the affected joint
- Orthotics or specially prescribed shoes
- Joint replacement

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Foods to Help Arthritis

According to the Arthritis Foundation, certain foods have been shown to fight inflammation, strengthen bones and boost the immune system. Adding these foods to your balanced diet may help ease the symptoms of your arthritis.

1. 3 to 4 ounces of **omega-3 fatty acid fish**, should be eaten twice a week. Omega-3-rich fish include salmon, tuna, mackerel and herring. Great for: rheumatoid arthritis
2. Heart-healthy **soybeans** (tofu or edamame) are low in fat, high in protein and fiber and an all-around good-for-you food. Great for: rheumatoid arthritis
3. Extra virgin **olive oil** is loaded with heart-healthy fats, as well as oleocanthal, which has properties similar to non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs. Avocado and safflower oils have shown cholesterol-lowering properties, while walnut oil has 10 times the omega-3s that olive oil has. Great for: rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis
4. **Cherries** help reduce the frequency of gout attacks. The anthocyanins found in cherries have an anti-inflammatory effect. Anthocyanins can also be found in other red and purple fruits like strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries. Great for: gout
5. **Low-fat dairy products**, like milk, yogurt and cheese are packed with calcium and vitamin D, both found to increase bone strength. Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption, and it has been shown to boost the immune system. Other calcium and vitamin D-rich foods include leafy green vegetables. Great for: osteoporosis, osteoarthritis
6. Rich in vitamins K and C, **broccoli** also contains a compound called sulforaphane, which could help prevent or slow the progression of osteoarthritis. Broccoli is also rich in calcium, which is known for its bone-building benefits. Great for: osteoarthritis
7. **Green tea** is packed with polyphenols, antioxidants believed to reduce inflammation and slow cartilage destruction. Great for: osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis
8. **Citrus fruits** – like oranges, grapefruits and limes – are rich in vitamin C. Getting the right amount of vitamins aids in preventing inflammatory arthritis and maintaining healthy joints with osteoarthritis. Great for: rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis
9. **Whole grains** lower levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) in the blood – a marker of inflammation associated with heart disease, diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. Foods like oatmeal, brown rice and whole-grain cereals are excellent sources of whole grains. Great for: rheumatoid arthritis
10. **Beans** are packed with fiber, a nutrient that helps lower CRP. Beans are also an excellent – and inexpensive – source of protein, which is important for muscle health. Some beans are rich in folic acid, magnesium, iron, zinc and potassium, all known for their heart and immune system benefits. Look for red beans, kidney beans and pinto beans. Great for: rheumatoid arthritis
11. Regularly eating foods from the allium family – such as **garlic, onions and leeks** – showed fewer signs of early osteoarthritis. The compound diallyl disulphide found in garlic may limit cartilage-damaging enzymes in human cells. Great for: osteoarthritis
12. **Nuts** are rich in protein, calcium, magnesium, zinc, vitamin E and immune-boosting alpha linolenic acid (ALA), as well as filling protein and fiber. Try walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios and almonds. Great for: osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis



Ingredients to Avoid

When you have arthritis, your body is in an inflammatory state. What you eat may not only increase inflammation, it can also set you up for other chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Here are eight food ingredients to avoid as they may trigger more inflammation in your body.

1. **Processed sugars.** Sugar goes by many names so look out for any word ending in “ose,” e.g. fructose or sucrose on ingredient labels
2. **Saturated fats.** Pizza, cheese, meat products (especially red meat), full-fat dairy products, pasta dishes and grain-based desserts.
3. **Trans fat.** Found in fast foods, fried products, processed snack foods, frozen breakfast products, cookies, donuts, crackers and most stick margarines.
4. Excess consumption of **omega-6s.** Found in oils such corn, safflower, sunflower, grapeseed, soy, peanut, and vegetable; mayonnaise; and many salad dressings.
5. **White flour** products (breads, rolls, crackers), white rice, white potatoes (instant mashed potatoes or French fries) and many cereals are refined carbohydrates.
6. **Mono-sodium glutamate (MSG).** Found in prepared Asian food, soy sauce, fast foods, prepared soups and soup mixes, salad dressings and deli meats.
7. **Gluten.** Found in wheat, barley and rye, or casein, and some dairy products. There may be an overlap in which some people with arthritis also have gluten sensitivity or celiac disease.
8. **Aspartame** (artificial sweetener). Found in more than 4,000 products worldwide.

Cutting back on foods that promote inflammation, increasing the proportion of fruits and vegetables in your diet, making fish your main protein and getting more omega-3s can make a big difference in your arthritis symptoms.

Visit www.arthritis.org for more information.