

ARTHRITIS and NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Osteoarthritis often afflicts older adults and can be described as the “wear and tear” form of arthritis. It occurs when the matrix of cartilage in a weight-bearing joint demineralizes due to the body’s natural declining level of glucosamine. This leads to brittleness and the development of bone spurs as the body tries to stabilize the joints.

Signs/Symptoms:

- Stiffness (especially in the morning)
- Painful and/or limited motion
- No signs of inflammation
- Occasionally only hands or knees are affected
- Rarely are all joints affected at once

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic inflammatory condition that may affect the whole body. The joints that are typically affected include hands, wrists, feet, ankles, and knees, but may include hips and shoulders. This form of arthritis is considered an autoimmune disease, which means that the immune system is attacking its own tissues, in this case the joints, causing a constant state of inflammation. The onset of rheumatoid arthritis has nothing to do with “wear and tear” of the joints and is often observed to be hereditary.

Signs/Symptoms:

- Joint may be warm, tender and/or swollen, with almost constant pain and stiffness
- Joint deformities may become evident

There are many contributing factors to arthritis, including overuse, trauma to the joint, inflammation, or age-related changes in the collagen repair system. Individuals with rheumatoid arthritis have shown to have increased intestinal permeability to dietary and bacterial antigens, triggering delayed food allergies. Any food can be problematic, and it is best to consult with your Naturopathic Doctor for more information.

Did you know?

The years of training of an ND is similar to a family physician.

NDs have been regulated by the Ontario government for over 80 years.

In Ontario, Naturopathic Doctors are represented by the Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors.

For additional information and resources on your health and naturopathic medicine visit www.oand.org

- Do your hands ache when you get up in the morning?
- Have you noticed you can’t move around like you used to?
- Are you looking for alternatives to the standard pain medications to help you deal with arthritis?

If you answered yes to any of these questions you may benefit from a consultation with a Naturopathic Doctor.

In your area, contact:



ARTHRITIS and NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

**There is a
Naturopathic
approach.**



Naturopathic medicine includes many approaches when dealing with arthritis that focus on correcting the body chemistry in order to slow down and reverse the disease process. Treatment should start as soon as possible after symptoms are diagnosed. Since Naturopathic Doctors look at the underlying causes of disease, recommended therapies and lifestyle changes will not mask symptoms, but rather bring healing and correction to the body.

Slowing the degeneration of the joints can be achieved through the use of specifically chosen diets, eliminating food sensitivities, vitamin supplementation, botanical medicine, acupuncture and lifestyle counselling. A Naturopathic Doctor will assess the level of pain and deterioration and develop an appropriate plan for treatment as well as pain management. Helping the body to eliminate toxins, and rebuilding its vitality in order to allow for healing and repair is the primary goal of naturopathic treatment.

If you or someone you know suffers from arthritis, you are one of over four million Canadians affected by this painful disease. Today, 75% of the Canadian population over the age of 50 is afflicted with this potentially debilitating condition. By rebalancing your body chemistry to slow down and reverse the disease process, naturopathic medicine may be able to help relieve the pain and inflammation associated with this increasingly common disease.



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NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

The primary goal of naturopathic medicine is to address the cause of a patient's illness, rather than treating or suppressing symptoms, with Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) devoting the time necessary to understand each individual patient. NDs are able to provide early diagnosis and treatment of many serious diseases. NDs also provide care that complements treatments received from other health care professions, and are highly trained to refer and consult as necessary. They are able to employ a wide range of therapies to create a preventive, restorative, and individualized approach to health care. These therapies include acupuncture and Asian medicine, botanical (herbal) medicine, homeopathic medicine, physical therapies, nutritional medicine, and lifestyle assessment and counselling.

Naturopathic medicine is founded on six principles:

- First, do no harm.
- Act in cooperation with the healing powers of nature.
- Address the fundamental causes of disease.
- Heal the whole person through individualized treatments.
- Teach the principles of healthy living.
- Prevention is the best cure.

Ontario's Naturopathic Doctors are highly trained and provincially regulated primary health care providers. NDs support and stimulate the body's ability to heal itself, focussing on prevention and using natural substances and treatments.

To practice in Ontario, NDs must complete a comprehensive and rigorous education program. This program includes three years of pre-medical studies at a recognized university followed by a four year program of full-time training at an accredited college of naturopathic medicine. After graduation, NDs must pass intensive regulatory board exams that are standardized across North America, before qualifying for registration with the provincial regulator.

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Naturopathic
Doctors

the voice and resource for Naturopathic Doctors