

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Living and coping with a chronic condition can be difficult. At times you may feel angry, depressed and isolated. It is not easy to accept the loss of good health or accept constant pain and changes in your physical appearance.

Talking about how you feel with someone who is close to you is very important. But sometimes you may feel the need to confide in someone who really understands. Arthritis New Zealand employs skilled Educators, who are always on hand. They can give you information and advice, put you in touch with support and exercise groups throughout the country and help you obtain special equipment and aids for daily living.

LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS

A variety of known techniques can help people control and reduce the effects of arthritis. Research has shown that people who exercise regularly, practise relaxation and/or use other self management techniques have less pain and are more active than those people who are not self managers.

Self management courses are available through Arthritis New Zealand. They are designed to give people the skills needed to take a more active part in their arthritis care, together with a healthcare team. Medication, physical activity, joint protection, stress management, acupuncture, heat/cold therapy and weight control to prevent extra stress on weight bearing joints, are just some of the components of self management.

ARTHRITIS NEW ZEALAND

Arthritis New Zealand is a not-for-profit organisation whose main aim is to enable a better quality of life for people affected by arthritis. Arthritis New Zealand works in the areas of education, public awareness, direct support, lobbying and funding research.

There are local Service Centres and 32 Arthritis Educators, who offer education, advice, information and guidance on services and special equipment. Arthritis Educators run highly regarded self management courses.

For more information look in the telephone directory for local contacts or contact:

ARTHRITIS NEW ZEALAND

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WELLINGTON

TELEPHONE 04 472 1427

www.arthritis.org.nz

ABOUT ARTHRITIS



Daily Post

Discover You Can

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Te whakapiki i te kounga ora

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ABOUT ARTHRITIS

Arthritis affects around one million New Zealanders. In fact, it is the single greatest cause of physical disability in this country.

Arthritis literally means 'inflammation of the joint.' There are more than 140 recognised forms of the condition, but the two most common types are Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis. It usually affects the 50 plus age group, and slightly more women than men have it. It involves the breakdown of the protective cushion of the cartilage covering the ends of the bones, where two bones meet to form a joint.

Rheumatoid Arthritis usually occurs between the ages of 20 and 55. Three times as many women as men are affected. If not properly treated rheumatoid inflammation can progressively damage joints and cause joint deformity. As an autoimmune condition Rheumatoid Arthritis can also affect other systems of the body.

WHO IS AT RISK?

While anyone can be affected by arthritis at any stage in their life, there are four groups most at risk:

Children

Around one child in a 1000 is affected by juvenile arthritis. It is commonly diagnosed between ages one and four, but can occur at any age.

Women

More women get arthritis than men, particularly Rheumatoid Arthritis. The onset of Rheumatoid Arthritis tends to be in young women or those of middle age.

Older People

Growing older increases the chances of getting arthritis, particularly Osteoarthritis.

Sports People

Injuries from contact and other very physical sports are likely to lead to Osteoarthritis. Prompt and appropriate treatment at the time of the injury lessens the risk of long term damage.



ARTHRITIS SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

- swelling in one or more joints
- early morning stiffness for more than a few minutes
- recurring pain or tenderness in one or more joints
- reduced movement
- obvious redness or warmth in one or more joints
- unexplained weight loss, fever or weakness combined with joint pain

TREATMENT

Treatment depends on the type and severity of the arthritis. It is important a correct diagnosis is made before beginning any treatment. Generally, for most types of arthritis, the treatment will include medication, rest and/or exercise, joint protection and in some cases surgery may be recommended to correct or prevent deformity, relieve pain, increase mobility and improve quality of life.



SERVICES PROVIDED BY ARTHRITIS NEW ZEALAND

Education including information brochures, a quarterly magazine *The Juice*, condition specific programmes and a website.

Public Awareness including national campaigns such as 'Move it or Lose It,' media releases, seminars and forums.

Direct Support is provided to clients by Arthritis Educators. This support includes assessment, information and advice, referral to relevant agencies and self management education. Volunteers provide services in local areas including governance, assisting service providers, lobbying and fundraising.

Lobbying is done on behalf of people with arthritis to policy and decision makers at a local and national level. The many issues include drug subsidies and access to rheumatologists.

Funding of Research in New Zealand is done through a 'National Arthritis Research Fund' with capital over \$1,400,000, sponsored by Arthritis New Zealand.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- become a member of Arthritis New Zealand
- make provision in your will for Arthritis New Zealand
- make a donation – every dollar counts
- offer to become a volunteer in your area