

Arthritis

About arthritis

Arthritis is used as a general term for a number of painful conditions of the joints and bones. Although it is often associated with older people, children may also be affected. Arthritis affects women more often than men.

The main symptoms are stiffness, pain, and restricted movements of the joints. Other symptoms that may occur are swelling, warmth and redness of the skin over the joint. The severity and degree of joint involvement varies greatly.

There are different types of arthritis including:

- osteoarthritis
- gout
- juvenile idiopathic arthritis
- systemic lupus erythematosus (lupus)
- scleroderma
- rheumatoid arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis affects about 1% - 3% of the population and predominantly women. It is a chronic condition that can often be a result of food reactions; the damage that these reactions can cause may eventually manifest as arthritis. Left untreated, inflammation may spread to additional joints and may lead to deformity and instability of joints.

Bacterial and other infectious diseases in which IgG responses are involved can also cause arthritis. Examples of such causes of arthritis are:

- Lyme borreliosis
- Chlamydia trachomatis
- Chlamydia psittaci
- Mycoplasma fermentans
- Mycoplasma genitalium
- Mycoplasma pneumoniae

Standard treatments

Standard treatments for arthritis may commonly involve medicines such as paracetamol or aspirin which can have serious side effects such as stomach pain and bleeding when taken over long periods or in high doses.

Other complementary therapies have been used to treat arthritis include:

- acupuncture
- osteopathy
- chiropractic
- electrotherapy

Breakspear Medical's approach

By using various investigations, we can try to determine the cause of the inflammation, which may be an autoimmune disease or allergic reaction or a combination of factors. We can then work towards eliminating the cause, which may alleviate the arthritic symptoms.

We may recommend using various certified laboratory tests to check allergies, gut function, bacterial and yeast overgrowth, the immune system and nutritional status. It is possible that parasites may, in some cases, be responsible for infecting joints. In a large group of people who have rheumatoid arthritis affecting the temporomandibular joints, where these joints have been removed surgically, the tissues were found to be infected with organisms such as Chlamydia (a parasite) and Mycoplasma (a bacterium without a cell wall). Rickettsiae have also been suggested as infecting organisms. These are all difficult to identify in sufferers from symptoms alone.

A diet evaluation and gut function test may indicate areas for improvement in a arthritic patient's diet which will help ease the condition. After nutritional evaluation, supplements such as DHA/EPA, blackcurrant oil or borage oil, Vitamin C and E, folic acid and Glucosamine sulphate may be recommended.

Professional advice

If you suffer from any form of arthritis, make an appointment for a consultation with a doctor at Breakspear Medical to find out what options may be available to help you.