

# Knights of Columbus' Sept. Arthritis campaign set to kick

Knights of Columbus councils in both Acton and Georgetown will once again be conducting a September door-to-door canvass in aid of the Arthritis Society. Over 400 people in Halton Hills receive aid from the Society in various forms and the Knights have made this drive their biggest charitable fundraising event.

Misinformation about "miracle cures" and unproven remedies for arthritis can also be dangerous and the Arthritis Society this year is warning about their ill-effects.

Many people with arthritis have tried an unproven remedy at some point," said Dr. Arthur Bookman, medical advisor for The Arthritis Society, Ontario Division. "They are willing to try anything that may help. But they can

end up losing money and, often, end up in more pain, because they have abandoned their prescribed medical treatment."

Arthritis is chronic. Its painful symptoms can come and go for an apparent reason. Furthermore, what causes many types of arthritis and what cures them remains largely unknown. Faced with these facts great numbers of people with arthritis are often tempted to look elsewhere for help.

Unfortunately some people try to take advantage of their pain and fear by selling items such as copper bracelets, special gloves, mechanical/electrical devices, and dietary supplements like alfalfa tablets, gin and garlic cures, and cod liver oil to "oil the joints". It's estimated that for every dollar

donated to arthritis research, approximately \$25 is spent on unproven remedies in North America.

There are two reasons that explain why people experience an improvement in their illness after using an unproven remedy. One is the "placebo effect," the power of mind over matter. People who want to get better and have faith they will get better if they try something new, often do get better - temporarily. With rare exceptions, the apparent benefits resulting from the placebo effect are shortlived.

The other reason people with arthritis often feel better after using an unproven remedy is simply because of the nature of arthritis. Many types of arthritis are

characterized by exacerbations and remissions -- that is, times when symptoms flare up or disappear since antiquity; they were just as ineffective then as they are now.

**Diet** - Despite individual testimonials and sophisticated marketing campaigns for special diets or food supplements, no significant clinical evidence has emerged to support claims that arthritis is caused by certain foods or cured through dietary modification. However, a healthy, balanced diet helps arthritis treatment be its most effective.

**Gadgets** - There are enough gadgets for arthritis to fill a hardware store, ranging from "inductoscopes" (allegedly of magnetic induction) to a "solarium board"

(to align mixed-up electrons). Aside from being expensive, none of these devices has been proven to be beneficial for arthritis.

Appear suddenly. A period of remission, when symptoms go away, does not mean that the illness is cured or that it will not flare up at some future time.

**Here are just a few unproven remedies to avoid:**

**Bee Venom** - In 1982, researchers confirmed that high-dose, purified honeybee extract modified an experimental kind of arthritis in rats. They estimated that a single effective injection for human beings would cost more than \$10 thousand.

**Cocaine** - In 1979, claims appeared touting the curative qualities of cocaine for rheuma-



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