

Ask the expert:

Taking control of your arthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis and is a leading cause of pain and disability. Dr. Vivien Brown, family physician, answers one of the most common questions about OA.

Q: I just found out I have osteoarthritis in my knees. Does that mean that in a few years I'll be in too much pain to walk?

A: There are a lot of factors that come into play which can leave a person immobile due to arthritis. The good news is, there are steps you can take to help keep you mobile, active, and comfortable. Start by looking at your body weight. Excess body weight may put extra stress and pressure on your knee and hip joints, and can aggravate your arthritis, making it more painful.

Another helpful step is participating in activities like swimming, walking, and stretching to keep your joints moving. Exercise can improve your joint pain and stiffness.

If you are experiencing pain, there are things you can do to keep it to a minimum. For example, I recommend that patients manage their day-to-day pain first with acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol Arthritis Pain, which is also recommended as a first-line treatment by the Canadian Rheumatology Association. Many people also benefit from using heat to relieve pain and improve movement— like taking a warm bath or shower, or using a heating pad.

When people are first diagnosed with osteoarthritis, it can be overwhelming



and confusing. According to a new Leger Marketing survey, one in three Canadians with arthritis say that when diagnosed, they were confused about how to reduce their pain and prevent it from getting worse in the future. So, The Arthritis Society has created a new tool called, The Just Diagnosed Toolkit. It is now available online at www.arthritis.ca/justdiagnosedkit, www.tylenol.ca, and www.livingwell.ca, and is designed to help patients recently diagnosed with OA learn how to manage their pain and get back to the life they enjoy.

—News Canada

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