

Unionville woman copes with arthritis

Unionville resident, Marion Clark, tells her story.

Living With Arthritis

I have been living with rheumatoid arthritis for about 25 years. This disease usually strikes in the prime of life, between the ages of 20 and 40, and more often afflicts women than men.

My first warning of the disease was painfully swollen wrists which made my career of teaching school difficult and exhausting. With special care and extra rest my disease went into remission for a number of years.

The disease reappeared with a vengeance after my last son was born. This time my wrists, feet and knees were very swollen and the pain was excruciating. Life at this time was very difficult for my husband and myself with a young family that needed my help and attention.

Many days I was unable to get out of bed and other days, it was a painful and exhausting experience to get down the stairs to make breakfast.

It was at this stage of my disease that my doctor sent a physiotherapist from The Arthritis Society into my home. She instructed me on how to give myself hot wax treatments daily and exercises to use with the treatments.

She also made soft inserts for my shoes to make walking a little easier. She suggested many different ways that I could make my household

chores easier and made time in my schedule for much needed rest to combat the constant fatigue that plagues arthritis victims.

This wonderful service was a Godsend to me at a time when it would have been very difficult to get to a hospital for this type of help.

For anyone who thinks they may have arthritis, my first suggestion is to act immediately and see your family doctor. An early diagnosis is the key to successful treatment. Treatment that is now available can prevent or reduce disability, but the disease cannot yet be eliminated completely.

The family doctor may refer you to a rheumatologist who is familiar with the latest treatment available to help the 115 types of arthritis. To date there is no cure for arthritis but research is making it possible to find out more about its cause. I hope that the future will hold a cure for the four million Canadians who suffer from this painful disease.

The contribution from our campaign will be used to make people more aware of the help available to them and to generally educate the public about arthritis.

For more information: Markham office - 475-5678, Ross or Dorothy Gilbert 294-3568; Thornhill - Leone Kalm 889-0516 or Jack Derry 889-4582; Unionville - Marion Clark 477-2459, Diane Baker 447-1936.



THE ARTHRITIS SOCIETY

Little-known arthritis facts

- A correct diagnosis is the foundation of proper treatment, and only a physician is trained to make that diagnosis.

- An early diagnosis is the key to successful treatment. The earlier the diagnosis the better the final result will be.

- Treatment is now available that can prevent or reduce disability, but most forms of arthritis cannot yet be eliminated completely. Beware of any individual or organization that promises a cure or "instant" relief; they may be more interested in your money than your problem.
- Known treatment measures are effective. They are based on sound, scientific research and have met international standards. Do not rely on the latest fad in the hope the disease will go away.

- Your success in fighting arthritis will be determined by more than just the treatment your doctor prescribes. You are the most important part of your own treatment team. Become involved and follow your prescribed treatment program faithfully.
- Medications are your responsibility. Your doctor will prescribe

them, but it is up to you to make sure that you take them as advised. Never change your own dosage, or take more or fewer of them, without consulting your doctor. Never take anyone else's prescription, no matter how well it is working for them. Never mix off-the-shelf medications with prescription drugs, without first talking to your doctor.

- Ask questions, and learn as much as you can about your disease. An informed patient usually suffers fewer fears and is less likely to try to "cure" the disease on his or her own, using untested medicines and devices.

THE WARNING SIGNS

- Persistent pain and stiffness after getting up in the morning.
- Uncommon pain, tenderness or swelling in any joint, especially if it is accompanied by fatigue, unexplained weight loss or fever.
- Recurrent or persistent pain and stiffness in the neck, lower back, knees, wrists or hands, especially if there is no obvious reason.
- Any recurrence of these symptoms, especially if they involve more than one joint or joints in different parts of the body.

Don't ignore

Symptoms of arthritis

In Canada almost 4 million people have arthritis, and 75,000 of them are under the age of 14.

People who experience an aching joint often delay seeking medical care, and such behavior may actually be harmful.

Symptoms of arthritis include:

- Persistent pain and stiffness on arising.
- Pain, tenderness or swelling in one or more joints.
- Pain and stiffness in lower back, knees or other joints.
- Tingling sensation in fingertips, hands or feet.
- Unexplained weight loss, fever, weakness or fatigue.

Early diagnosis and prompt medical treatment can alleviate pain and prevent disabilities in four out of five patients.

September is Arthritis Month and The Arthritis Society is launching a major campaign to educate the public about this painful, disabling disease.

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Garage, bike sale Sept. 27

The Markham-Unionville chapter of B'nai Brith women are holding their third annual Garage and Bike sale next Sunday, Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 273 Main St. Unionville.

Proceeds from the sale will go towards the Markham-Stouffville Hospital fund.

The Arthritis Society wishes to thank these community minded organizations for their support



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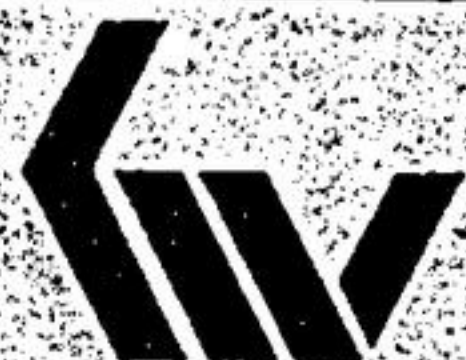
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