



Reduce Your Risk of Painful and Limiting Arthritis

Arthritis literally means joint inflammation and refers to more than 100 different diseases that affect millions of Americans. One of the most common types of arthritis in adults is Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). Affecting 1.3 million Americans, RA is an autoimmune disease causing pain in the joints and systemic inflammation that can occur throughout the body. According to the Arthritis Foundation, there are nearly three times as many women with the disease than men and it commonly begins between the ages of 30 and 60. It often occurs later in life for men, however, even older teens and people in their 20s can get RA.

Causes

Many scientists agree that a combination of genetic and environmental factors is responsible. Research is being done on the possibility of bacteria or viruses being the possible trigger for those with the genetic propensity in addition to female hormones and the body's handling of stressful trauma increasing the risk. An unhealthy lifestyle and smoking has also been identified as increasing the onset of RA, and can also worsen the severity of the symptoms and severely affect mobility.

Symptoms

Although the affects can change daily and vary for each individual, the joints feel warm and inflamed, with swelling and pain in the affected areas around the joints. Along with less range of motion, RA is symmetrical, which means an affected joint on one side also involves the corresponding joint on the other side of the body. A low-grade fever, fatigue and loss of appetite are associated with RA. Affecting many different joints, the long-term effects can cause damage to cartilage, tendons and ligaments.

Prevention and Management

You can minimize your risk of developing RA, and help manage the symptoms by:

1. Maintaining a healthy diet and cutting down on inflammatory foods such as caffeine, dairy, sugar, wheat and red meat.
2. Quitting smoking, as studies have shown that it increases the risk of RA.
3. Ensuring you get regular exercise to prevent weight gain and joint stiffness. Gentle exercise can strengthen the muscles around your joints; however avoid straining tender or inflamed joints.
4. Drinking plenty of water for good hydration and flushing out toxins.
5. Exploring natural remedies such as herbs, nutritional supplements or acupuncture.
6. Getting enough sunshine for building Vitamin D and overall health.

You can do your part in reducing the risk of this painful condition that can limit your mobility.

This article is written by Network LIFELINE, the largest medical alert device program in Western PA. This program delivers extraordinary service to nine counties and offers the cutting-edge **Auto Alert** -- which automatically detects falls, provides peace of mind and assists people with living independently longer. Contact Bob Gordon at 412-779-0696 or toll free 866-677-7795.