



September 23rd, 2012

September, the Arthritis Month

Did you know September is Arthritis month?

Pain, swelling and stiffness are just some of the symptoms used to describe the hundreds of different variety of issues that are a result of inflammation around joints.

As a chronic disorder, arthritis affects 1 in 7 Canadians – ranging from mild to chronic symptoms. Contrary to popular belief - arthritis isn't age specific. Both children and older people are affected by arthritic conditions. The good news is that with early intervention, better outcomes can be realized, so don't ignore symptoms. Talk to your health care professional.

Two common forms of arthritis are osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Osteoarthritis is considered the "wear-and-tear" version of arthritis, as opposed to the auto-immune type of rheumatoid arthritis. Recent estimates from the Arthritis Foundation conclude that most people over 60 have OA to some degree – but less than half notice any symptoms.

A recent study has found that one-third of arthritis patients also suffer from depression and anxiety. Arthritis impacts both physical and mental outlooks of a patient - so the best treatments balance and address both emotional and physical pain.

Low Impact Exercise

Not surprisingly, exercise is a great way to address both the emotional and physical conditions. For many patients, getting moving while experiencing pain can be difficult, but the opportunities far outweigh the costs. Low impact exercise can prevent additional damage while offering better weight management, flexibility and balance. Get the pool, ride your bike or use an elliptical machine to reduce pressure on joints.

Diet

Boost your anti-inflammatory fighting power - add tart cherries or tart cherry juice to your diet. Women participants of a study, who drank tart cherry juice twice daily for 3 weeks, experienced significantly reduced levels of inflammation markers and reduced pain by up to 20. Add tart cherries to your diet - it may help you manage your levels of pain.

Other treatment

There are also several over-the-counter treatments that can assist with arthritis pain, but each has its own benefits and risks. I always suggest that you talk to your pharmacist to find a solution that is right for you.