



September 8th, 2014

Easing Pain

Improve Your Ergonomics

Neck pain can impair day-to-day functionality, and while the causes can include arthritis, spinal problems, poor posture, muscle issues, stress or lack of sleep, you can make changes to reduce its impact. Improve the ergonomics of your environment (e.g. computer screen at eye level), don't use too many pillows, move around frequently, don't overtax neck muscles, keep your eyeglass prescription up-to-date, and get enough rest.

Exercise is Effective Treatment

The most effective treatment for fibromyalgia may be exercise. A leading expert has pointed out that, of the available management strategies, aerobic exercise, followed by cognitive behavioural therapy, has the most benefit. Interestingly, drug therapies don't even make the top 10 – probably due to their side-effect profiles. That said, treatment should be individualized and consider tolerability, safety, cost, and patient willingness.

Exercise may also be the secret weapon in managing joint pain, commonly called arthritis. Although moving seems to aggravate the pain, inactivity can actually make the problem worse by weakening support muscles, allowing joint problems to escalate, and affecting posture - sparking other aches and pains. Look for low-impact exercises, such as swimming or cycling, and those that involves a broad range of motion.

Drink Milk!

A recent study looked at the consumption of dairy products and the progression of osteoarthritis. It found that milk consumption (10+ glasses per week for women, 7+ glasses per week for men) is associated with an improvement in the progression of osteoarthritis. However, cheese consumption worsened the osteoarthritis – thought to be due to the presence of fatty acids. So, drink your moo!

September is Arthritis Month. Arthritis represents approximately 100 different conditions, including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid, but also conditions such as gout and lupus, and it affects an estimated 1 in 6 Canadians. See www.arthritis.ca. Talk to your pharmacist about your arthritis medications.