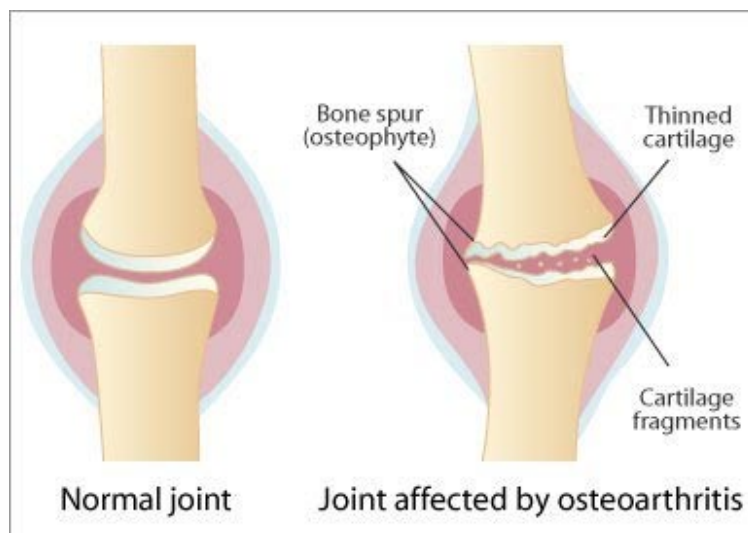


Osteoarthritis

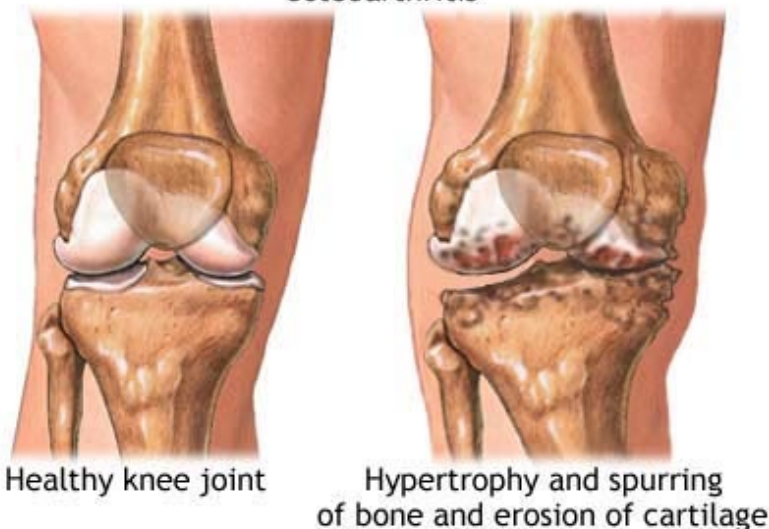
Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis. It is sometimes called degenerative joint disease.

OA affects 1 in 10 Canadians. Although most people develop OA after the age of 45, it can occur at any age.

OA is caused when the cartilage that covers the ends of bones starts to breakdown. Normally, cartilage acts as a shock absorber and allows the bones to move smoothly. Once a joint develops OA the cartilage gradually becomes rough and thin and the bone underneath thickens.



Osteoarthritis



Healthy knee joint

Hypertrophy and spurring of bone and erosion of cartilage

ADAM.

Risk Factors

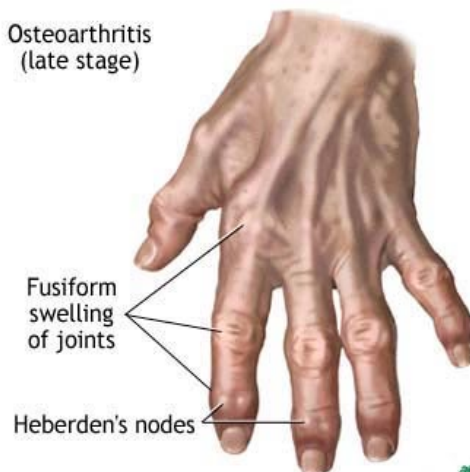
- **Older age:** Usually occurs in older adults.
- **Sex:** Women are more likely to develop OA than men.
- **Joint injuries:** Injuries such as those from an accident or sports can increase the risk of OA.
- **Bone deformities;** people born with defective cartilage or malformed joints have an increased risk.
- **Obesity:** Being overweight places more stress on the weight-bearing joints e.g. knees and hips.

Over time the cartilage may completely wear away and leave the bones in the joint rubbing together, bone on bone.

As the disease progresses, bits of cartilage may break off and float around inside the joint. This can irritate the soft tissues in the joint and lead to inflammation and pain. Once this happens moving the joint can become difficult.

As the cartilage wears down the bones may form small bumps on their ends, or spurs.

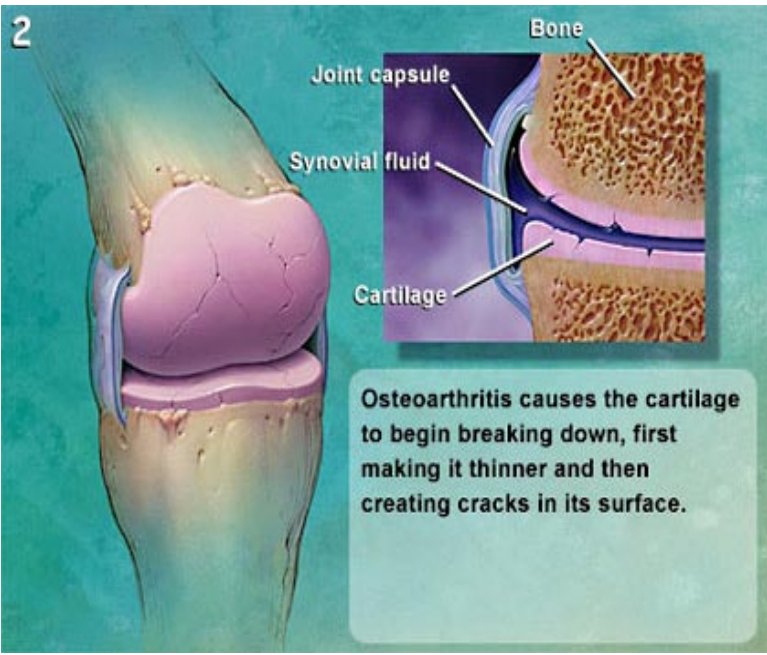
Osteoarthritis (late stage)



Fusiform swelling of joints

Heberden's nodes

ADAM.



Usual Symptoms of Osteoarthritis

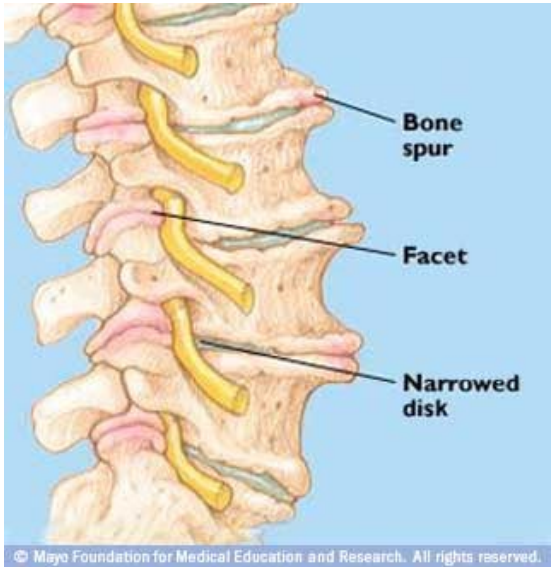
The symptoms of OA usually start slowly and worsen over time.

Signs and symptoms of OA include:

- Pain in a joint during or after use, or after a period of inactivity.
- Tenderness in the joint when light pressure is applied
- Stiffness in the joint, most noticeable when you first wake up in the morning or after a period of inactivity.
- Loss of flexibility
- Grating sensation when you use the joint.
- Bone spurs which can appear as hard lumps around the joint.
- Swelling

What can physiotherapy do to help?

- We can use acupuncture or electrotherapy to relieve pain.
- We use manual therapy and exercises to increase the mobility of your joints.
- We develop a personalized exercise program to address any muscle imbalances
- We advise you on how to remain active without further damaging your joints.



Medical Options

Another option for the treatment of some arthritic joints is viscosupplementation. The affected joint is injected with a viscosupplement, which then lubricates the joint by boosting the natural elasticity and viscosity of the synovial fluid. By increasing the lubrication of the joint the mobility also increases and pain is reduced.

If your joint is causing you severe pain, limiting your function and day-to-day activities, then you may be a candidate for a joint replacement.

Your doctor can refer you to one of our Sport Medicine Physicians for a consultation and if viscosupplementation is not appropriate for you, they may refer you to an Orthopedic Surgeon.