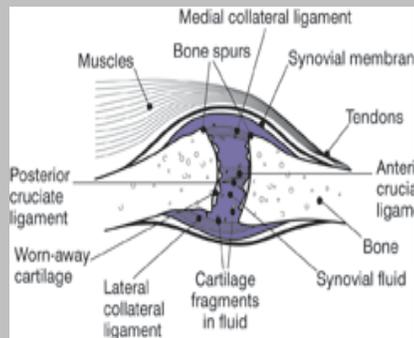


# JUST DIAGNOSED: OSTEOARTHRITIS

**Osteoarthritis (OA) IS A CONDITION WHERE THE CARTILAGE LINING OF YOUR JOINT WEARS DOWN LEADING TO BONE ON BONE PAIN.**



## **SELF-MANAGEMENT OF OA**

*Use of heat or ice packs on the joints can reduce pain and swelling. A good rule of thumb is to apply for 20 minutes at a time with a barrier between the skin and the pack to prevent damage to the skin or tissues.*

**Causes and Risk Factors:** Osteoarthritis (OA) can be caused by an injury to a joint; obesity is a risk factor as well as the “wear and tear” of aging.

**Signs and symptoms of OA** include pain in the joint worsening over time or with use or after exercise. You may notice stiffness, loss of movement, the joint getting larger and/or a grating noise at the joint with use. Most commonly affected joints are the hips, knees and back although other joints like fingers and neck may be included.

**DIAGNOSIS:** a combination of examination, your symptoms and x-rays may be used.

**Treatment:** medications may be used and include;

*Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS): Reduces inflammation and pain.*

*Joint injections- sometimes with cortisone and other substances.*

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What about complementary therapies?

Some complementary therapies that have been found to be beneficial are massage and acupuncture. The most important thing to know about complementary therapies is to discuss them with your doctor before starting.

Helpful websites:

[www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

[www.rheumatology.org](http://www.rheumatology.org) (look for patient resources)

[www.blackhillsarthritis.org](http://www.blackhillsarthritis.org)

## EXERCISE

Water based exercise is especially good for people with OA and there are Arthritis Foundation warm water exercise classes available in the Rapid City area.

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

**Diet:** Many people wonder if there is a diet they can follow to improve their OA. Following a healthy diet with additional focus on weight management, adequate calcium, Vitamin D and omega 3 oils is recommended. There is no known diet cure for OA. Weight loss if you are overweight is especially helpful for OA.

**Education:** learning everything you can about OA from reliable sources is empowering and makes you an active well informed part of your health care team.

**Other treatments:** Your doctor may advise the use of pain relieving creams, braces or elastic wraps for your painful joint.

**Surgery:** You may be told you need a joint replacement surgery. Seek a good orthopedic surgeon who has performed this surgery often.

**Seek Support:** *Studies show people with adequate levels of support do much better in following their medical regimen. Black Hills Arthritis Association has a monthly support group! We meet the second Saturday of each month from 9-11 at Rapid City Regional Hospital in the Sylvan Room. We also have an ongoing email based support group. If interested just email [info@blackhillsarthritis.com](mailto:info@blackhillsarthritis.com).*

