

FOOT NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SPRINGFIELD PODIATRY AND ACCURATE FOOT & DIABETIC CARE

October, 2021 Edition

OCTOBER IS ARTHRITIS AWARENESS MONTH

While October is well known as Breast Cancer Awareness month, it is also Arthritis Awareness month. Furthermore, October 12th is World Arthritis Day (WAD) which aims to raise global awareness of the existence and impact of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). More than 200 of these diseases exist and can be very debilitating. Here are a few of the more common forms of arthritis we see.

Osteoarthritis (OA) or Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD) is the most common type of arthritis, affecting over 32.5 million adults in the US. Often referred to as “wear and tear” arthritis, this condition involves damage to joint cartilage which is the smooth surface of each adjacent bone in a joint. The cartilage allows for the smooth gliding of the bones, so as it wears away, the bones start to rub together, causing pain. As the bones grind together, excess bone builds up along the outer circumference of the joints as bone spurs. This reduces the flexibility of the joints and reduces the motion. These two factors cause irritation and inflammation of the joint capsule, the tissue surrounding the joints to hold in the lubricating joint fluids. The supporting ligaments can also become damaged by the bone spurs and ensuing inflammation. Over time, these arthritic joints become more enlarged, stiff and swollen. OA is diagnosed by physical examination and X-rays.

Treatment strategies for OA/DJD include weight loss, low impact exercise, medications for the symptoms of pain and inflammation, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), steroids, pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), physical therapy with flexibility and muscle strengthening exercises, supportive devices such as orthotics, braces, canes or walkers, steroid injections,

“cartilage replacement” injections (Synvisc and Monovisc), Class IV laser therapy, and surgery if conservative measures fail.

Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) is a chronic inflammatory disorder that generally affects multiple joints as well as other soft tissue structures. It affects approximately 1.3 million Americans, with women being 2.5 times more likely to have RA than men. This type of arthritis is actually an autoimmune disease where the body’s immune system attacks and damages its own tissues, predominantly the connective tissue that makes up the lining of the joint capsule. This leads to inflammation that causes joint swelling and pain. Over time, this inflammation damages the cartilage, and the swelling stretches out the joint capsule and supporting ligaments, leading to deformities. In the feet, we often see bunion and hammertoe deformities, but we also may see all of the toes bend towards the little toe. (Similar findings are seen with the fingers.) The pain and deformities of RA can be very debilitating. RA tends to involve multiple joints and can also damage organs and lead to weight loss and fatigue. There are several types of inflammatory arthritis conditions that have similar symptoms, such as psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and Lupus.

Rheumatoid arthritis is diagnosed by physical examination, X-rays and blood tests. Its symptoms can be treated as noted above with OA, but in order to slow the progression of the damage caused by one’s own immune system gone awry, patients with inflammatory conditions are often treated with medications to suppress their over-active immune system with a family of medications called DMARDs or disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs. Some foods that can aggravate RA include fried foods, fatty foods, sugars and simple carbohydrates, gluten, preservatives and flavor enhancers and alcohol. It is also helpful to stop smoking. A plant-based diet of healthy fruits and vegetables that are high in antioxidants can help to reduce the inflammation associated with RA. Additionally, eggs have vitamin D which acts to reduce inflammation.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

Those of you frequenting the Drexel Hill office likely know our receptionist, Maria. She and her husband, Rick, recently adopted a released service dog named Marty, a two year old yellow Labrador Retriever. At the time, they already had another Lab, Georgia, who did not like having to share the spot light and human attention with Marty. Initially, Georgia set the boundaries regarding her space, toys, etc., but the two soon learned to get along, frequently bounding through the house chasing each other, going on walks together and playing tug-of-war. While there have been challenges during the acclimation of the dogs, it has been very rewarding for Maria and her husband.

MYTH BUSTERS

Being out in the cold causes a cold. Nope! The rhinovirus causes the common cold, not the cold weather. However, prolonged exposure to cold temperatures may weaken your immune system and make you more susceptible to the cold virus.

FUN FACTS

Coffee has anti-inflammatory activity and can benefit those with arthritis. Also, the stimulant effect of caffeine can help to fight the physical and mental fatigue associated with inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.

WHAT'S NEW

We have a topical medication available in our office that contains CDB oil for pain relief called Canodyne gel. Just a little bit goes a long way to safely reduce painful muscles and joints without interacting with other medications. Ask us about our Canodyne gel at your next appointment!

QUOTES

October is about trees revealing colors they've hidden all year. People have an October as well.

PUNNY STUFF

No matter how much you push the envelope, it will still be stationary.

PUZZLE:

Call today for your foot health evaluation!

In Drexel Hill, call 484-459-5954
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In West Chester, call 610-436-5883
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Or visit us at www.drsiegerman.com

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