



Health Care Forum

Treatment Works On Most Arthritic Feet

(NAPSA)—Your feet take tremendous abuse. Walking on cement can give each foot a 180-pound jolt with each step. Many people experience arthritis of the feet, but few are aware that this condition can often be successfully treated.

Arthritis is caused by the erosion of cartilage, the connective tissue at the ends of bones which allows bones to glide freely on one another. Walking on a foot with painful arthritis is similar to running an automobile without oil in the engine; the parts can't move smoothly. Eventually they grind on each other.

Other causes of degenerative arthritis are excessive motion in a joint, caused by an unstable foot or by trauma such as sprains and fractures. As arthritis progresses, it may cause pain and stiffness (especially in the morning) and eventually may limit everyday activities.

Although arthritis of the feet and ankles may have different causes, the treatments are often similar. X-rays are required to correctly diagnose arthritis. Conservative (non-surgical) treatments may consist of strappings; arch supports (orthotics); supportive shoes; cortisone injections; and medications and physical therapy to relieve the symptoms.

Surgical treatments may include removal of bone spurs; partial removal of the arthritic joint; fusion of the joint to limit the motion which causes the pain; and joint replacement.

In most cases, reconstructive surgery can bring improvement. Relief of pain is the most common



No matter the cause, most arthritis pain in the feet can be alleviated through treatment.

benefit, but others may include an improved ability to move the joint, and an improved appearance. Surgery usually requires only one to two hours and is often completed on an outpatient basis. Surgical treatment will not cure arthritis or completely restore the joint to its natural health, but it will ease pain and make daily activities more manageable.

Podiatrists are foot care specialists who offer state-of-the-art treatment. Your podiatrist will examine your feet, possibly perform tests such as X-rays, and review the different treatments available for each condition. In many cases, the pain associated with arthritic conditions can be alleviated, allowing increased mobility and a healthier lifestyle.

For more information call 1-800-FOOTCARE or visit www.apma.org.