

# Ask The Doctor About Osteoarthritis Pain



(NAPSA)—More than 100 different types of arthritis conditions exist, with osteoarthritis (OA) being the most common. OA affects nearly 21 million people in the United States, causing pain and loss of movement in the joints. Common joints affected by OA include the hands, feet, spine and large weight-bearing joints, such as the hips and knees.

According to the American Chronic Pain Association, chronic pain is pain that continues a month or more beyond the usual recovery period for an injury or illness, or that goes on for months or years due to a chronic condition.

If chronic pain caused by OA has become a routine part of your day, and even wakes you up at night, you should discuss your treatment options with your doctor. The good news is that a variety of pain treatment options are available.

Dr. Barry Straus, MD, JD, Medical Director, North Georgia Pain Clinic, an arthritis expert, answers some common questions about OA:

**Q: I am a 55-year-old woman and for months now, I have had stiffness and swelling in my knees, making it painful to walk. Could I have osteoarthritis?**

A: If you have pain, stiffness or swelling around a joint, it is important to talk to your doctor to get a diagnosis and treatment. Osteoarthritis (OA) symptoms often include pain and loss of movement in the joints. If you are diagnosed with OA, most treatment plans will include a combination of exercise, weight control, joint protection, physical therapy, and medication. Perhaps the most important part of treating OA is communicating openly with your doctor about your pain.

**Q: My husband has had persistent pain from OA for years and is currently taking a prescription medication, but he has to take it every 4-6 hours, and still is awakened by pain during the night. Does he have other options?**

A: Your husband should discuss his treatment options with his doctor. If his chronic pain has become a routine part of his day and even wakes him up at night, a long-acting prescription medicine, such as ULTRAM® ER (tramadol HCl) Extended-Release Tablets, may be an appropriate option to manage his pain. ULTRAM ER is a prescription medicine approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the management of moderate to moderately severe chronic pain in adults who require around-the-clock treatment of their pain for an extended period of time.

Unlike many pain relievers that are taken as needed, ULTRAM ER is taken once a day, every 24 hours, as directed by a doctor. ULTRAM ER does not treat osteoarthritis. It is designed to treat the pain associated with osteoarthritis.

Visit [www.ULTRAM-ER.com](http://www.ULTRAM-ER.com) to learn more about this medicine.

## IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Do not take ULTRAM ER if you have had an allergic reaction to tramadol, codeine, or other opioids in the past.

ULTRAM ER tablets must be swallowed whole. Do not chew, crush or split the tablet before swallowing. This can lead to overdose and possible serious injury, including death. Use of alcohol should be avoided when taking ULTRAM ER.

The maximum daily dose of ULTRAM ER is 300 mg. Do not

change your dose or stop taking ULTRAM ER without talking with your doctor first.

Talk with your doctor about all the medications you are taking. These may include antidepressants, tranquilizers, hypnotics or other opioid pain medicines. ULTRAM ER may impair your ability to perform potentially hazardous tasks, such as driving a car or operating machinery.

Seizures have been reported in people taking tramadol, the medicine in ULTRAM ER. The risk of seizures is increased with doses of tramadol above the recommended range. Use of tramadol increases the risk of seizures in people taking antidepressants, other opioids, or other drugs that can cause seizures. Risk of convulsions may also increase in people with epilepsy or a history of seizures.

ULTRAM ER, like other opioids, can be abused or cause dependence. People who are suicidal or have a history of drug addiction should not take ULTRAM ER. Do not take more than the recommended dose of ULTRAM ER. Taking more than the recommended dose of ULTRAM ER, alone or in combination with alcohol or medications such as tranquilizers, hypnotics or other opioids, can cause respiratory depression, seizures, overdose and possibly death.

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions and if you are pregnant, think you might be pregnant or are trying to become pregnant.

The most common side effects reported with ULTRAM ER were dizziness, nausea, constipation, headache and drowsiness.

For additional information and to read the full Prescribing Information, please visit [www.ULTRAM-ER.com](http://www.ULTRAM-ER.com).