

Healthy Living

Obesity: A Leading Cause Of Osteoarthritis

(NAPSA)—Obesity and osteoarthritis may not seem like a likely fit—but people who are overweight face a greater risk of having osteoarthritis of the knee. Being overweight places extra pressure on your joints and wears away cartilage (tissue that cushions the joints) that normally protects them. By losing weight, you can alleviate symptoms associated with osteoarthritis not to mention other ailments such as heart disease and diabetes.

Osteoarthritis is a progressive, degenerative joint disease characterized by a breakdown of the joint's cartilage. Cartilage breakdown causes bones to rub against each other, which may lead to loss of movement and increased pain. According to the Arthritis Foundation, every third person in the US suffers from joint pain and 20.7 million Americans are affected by osteoarthritis. It most commonly affects middle-aged and older people.

Evidence on the impact of obesity and osteoarthritis continues to grow. Data from the first National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES I) indicates that obese women have nearly four times the risk of knee osteoarthritis as compared with non-obese women; for obese men, the risk is nearly five times greater.

Currently, there is no cure for osteoarthritis although several treatment options are available. Since many of these treatment options, such as pain relievers and anti-inflammatory medications, have side effects, researchers have turned to nutritional interventions.

According to several clinical studies, a promising new treatment, collagen hydrolysate (CH), a special product derived from natural collagenous tissue, reduces pain, protects joint cartilage from damage and strengthens joint cartilage. Studies suggest that consumption of 10 grams of CH each day reduces pain and improves physical function in patients with osteoarthritis when taken for a minimum of 60 days. Additionally, CH not only reduced



pain but also reduced the need for pain relievers.

Laboratory experiments also demonstrate that CH, once ingested, accumulates in joint cartilage, where it stimulates the building of new cartilage.

CH is a natural, nutritional supplement that offers an identical amino acid composition as collagen in the joint cartilage. This is important because it is able to produce collagen for the regeneration of joints. Unlike other treatments, there are no adverse side effects associated with CH.

Various types of CH products are available on the market, such as cold-water soluble powders or collagen hydrolysate drinks in various flavors. CH products are often found in the joint health care section of drug stores.

In addition to CH, other important easy steps that can help make osteoarthritis more manageable include: exercising to keep joints flexible and improve muscle strength; controlling weight to prevent extra stress on weight-bearing joints and avoiding activities that may cause strain or stress on painful joints.

A combination of all these activities may just add that much needed spring in the osteoarthritis sufferer's step.