

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Understanding Osteoarthritis

(NAPSA)—Osteoarthritis (OA), the breakdown of cartilage in the joint, is the most common form of arthritis among Americans today. The disease primarily affects weight-bearing joints such as the knee. Although a variety of conditions can result in knee pain, it is



Dr. West

important to pay careful attention to your symptoms to determine if your pain is a result of OA. Dr. Robin West of the University of Pittsburgh Medical

Center answers a few questions to help you better understand knee OA and the available treatment options.

What are some of the symptoms of knee osteoarthritis?

The most common symptoms of knee OA are pain, swelling and stiffness of the knee. As the disease progresses, other symptoms may include limitations in range of motion and clicking or catching of the joint. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, contact your doctor to determine which treatment is best for you.

What kind of doctor should I see about my knee pain?

For the most part, your primary care doctor can diagnose osteoarthritis of the knee, but for more in-depth treatment, your doctor will most likely refer you to an orthopedic surgeon or a rheumatologist. The specialist will help you begin the course of action that is best for you based on the current state of your osteoarthritis.

With so many treatments out there, how do I know which one is right for me?

Only your doctor can tell you which type of treatment is right for you. Doctors often recommend over-the-counter pain relievers for

mild OA. But as the disease progresses, it is important to visit your doctor regularly to make sure that you are using the most appropriate treatment.

Viscosupplementation is a commonly prescribed treatment that lubricates the joint to reduce pain and stiffness. One such treatment, Euflexxa® (1% sodium hyaluronate), is used in cases of mild to moderate knee OA after unsuccessful treatment with exercise and simple analgesics.

I have food and medication allergies. Is there anything I should be aware of when deciding on a treatment option?

It is always important to pay close attention to the medications that you put in your body. Make your doctor aware of all of your allergies. When it comes to viscosupplementation treatments, people with allergies to avian products, including eggs, or manufacturing chemicals such as formaldehyde should ask for a therapy that is not manufactured using those elements, such as Euflexxa, to eliminate the risk of related reactions.

What activities will contribute to the progression of OA and which ones will not?

Low-impact activities, such as biking and swimming, are ideal for knee OA sufferers because they allow the knee to move while reducing stress on the joint. Whereas low-impact activities are beneficial to the arthritic knee, activities with a great deal of pounding on the joint, such as basketball and tennis, can increase the knee's wear and tear, furthering the progression of the disease.

For more information about osteoarthritis, talk to your doctor, and visit www.euflexxa.com to learn more about this treatment.



Note to Editors: Important Safety Considerations

Euflexxa® (1% sodium hyaluronate) is indicated for the treatment of knee pain due to osteoarthritis (OA). It is used in people who have failed to get adequate pain relief either from simple pain medications, such as acetaminophen, or from exercise and/or physical therapy. Euflexxa® should not be used in people who have had any previous allergic reaction to hyaluronate preparations or who have knee joint infections or skin diseases in the area of the injection site. In a randomized, double-blind, multicenter clinical trial, the only adverse event reported with Euflexxa® at an incidence greater than 5% was arthralgia (joint pain) (8.75%). Temporary knee pain and swelling may occur after injection with Euflexxa®. The safety and effectiveness of injecting Euflexxa® into the knee together with other injectable medications or into joints other than the knee have not been studied. The safety and effectiveness of treatment cycles of fewer than 3 injections or of repeated treatment cycles with Euflexxa® have not been established. Strict aseptic technique must be followed to avoid joint infection.

It is recommended to avoid strenuous activity or prolonged weight-bearing activities such as jogging or tennis within 48 hours following intra-articular injection.