

# ASK YOUR DOCTOR

## Understanding Osteoarthritis

(NAPSA)—Nearly 27 million Americans now struggle with osteoarthritis (OA), the most common form of arthritis. For decades, people thought arthritis was simply the result of aging. Today, people are learning that OA—the gradual breakdown of cartilage in the joint caused by wear and tear—affects people of every age. And much more can be done to relieve the discomfort it causes.



**Dr. Kevin Vincent**

Joint pain, swelling and stiffness often accompany the progression of OA and can seriously limit joint function. For those who suffer from the symptoms of knee OA, pain management is often a top priority. For patients with mild to moderate stages of knee OA, clearing up a few myths and taking some precautionary measures can go a long way.

Dr. Kevin Vincent, a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician in the University of Florida College of Medicine department of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation in Gainesville, Fla., answers some common questions about osteoarthritis of the knee.

### **I'm in my late 40s. When do I have to start worrying about osteoarthritis?**

Contrary to popular belief, age is not a determining factor in osteoarthritis of the knee. Wear and tear on the knee joint is the main cause of the onset and progression of the disease. Repeated participation in activities that put excess pressure on the knee joint (such as tennis and basketball) or previous injury are likely to contribute to the breakdown of cartilage over time.

### **Is surgery my only option?**

There are a variety of nonsurgi-

cal treatments to consider that can help manage the pain of knee OA. From weight loss to hyaluronic acid injections, there are a number of options that your doctor may recommend. Euflexxa, for example, is a hyaluronic acid (HA) therapy that is injected into the knee joint space once a week for three weeks to replenish the fluid lost to osteoarthritis. Using a treatment like Euflexxa, in combination with weight loss and appropriate exercise, may provide pain relief and help slow the progression of the disease.

### **Do I have to stop doing activities if I am suffering from knee OA?**

Finding the right treatment has helped many OA sufferers remain active long after they have been diagnosed. Successful treatment can result in decreased pain and greater mobility, allowing for increased activity and aiding in weight loss, both of which are key to combating OA. A number of low impact activities, such as biking or swimming, are excellent for remaining active while reducing the stress on the knee joint. Talking to your doctor is the best way to know which activities are right for you. After receiving HA injections like Euflexxa, many patients go back to an active lifestyle.

### **When should I talk to my doctor about my symptoms?**

It is never too early to ask questions. Talk to your doctor about joint pain and symptoms that may be signs of knee OA. Keep a journal of your symptoms, noting your response to each treatment that you try. Knowing your body and communicating with your doctor will put you on track to a life without the pain of knee OA.

For more information about osteoarthritis, you can talk to your doctor, and visit [www.euflexxa.com](http://www.euflexxa.com) to learn more about this treatment.



**Note to Editors: IMPORTANT SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: 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. Common adverse events reported were arthralgia (joint pain) and back pain. Temporary knee pain and swelling may occur after injection.

Strict aseptic technique must be followed to avoid joint infection.