



## Today we discuss... OSTEOARTHRITIS PAIN

One of the most common forms of pain pharmacists are asked to help manage is osteoarthritis pain.

Osteoarthritis is a disease of the joints where cartilage that normally cushions the joint has broken down causing pain, stiffness and muscle weakness in some.

This is a condition of aging as it often develops from the age of 45, with risk factors including a family history of osteoarthritis, previous injury or overuse of the joint, and being over weight.

Hands, spine, hips and knees are joints commonly affected.

Your doctor is the best person to diagnose osteoarthritis and this is often confirmed via X-ray.

Sometimes patients may be referred to a rheumatologist if needed. Joint pain has many causes and need appropriate diagnosis so it can be managed correctly.

Keeping your joints mobile is one of the best ways to help manage your osteoarthritis. A variety of exercises prescribed by your

doctor or physiotherapist will help to promote muscle strength around the joint improving support of sore joints, joint flexibility that is often compromised in osteoarthritis and improves balance and coordination. Some suitable activities can include warm water exercises, and Tai Chi.

A range of treatments are available over the counter from your pharmacist. One of the first line treatments of osteoarthritis is paracetamol.

Paracetamol can be used by most patients however, it is important to talk with your doctor or pharmacist before starting paracetamol on a regular basis to manage pain.

Topical treatments include anti-inflammatories and capsaicin. Both of these can provide relief for short periods of time. Complementary medications such as glucosamine and chondroitin are used to good effect by some patients.

Your doctor and pharmacist are great resources in guiding your choice of complementary, over the counter and prescription medication used to manage your osteoarthritis pain.

*For more information, visit:  
[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)*

## Talk to our pharmacists about our Prescription Management Service



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