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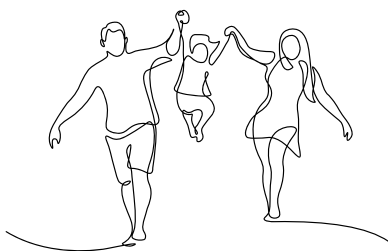
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## Risk Factors for Arthritis

Arthritis is common, affecting about 1 in 4 adults in the United States. The most common types are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, and the main symptoms are joint pain and stiffness, which typically get worse with age.

Osteoarthritis is the most common and is sometimes called “wear and tear” arthritis. Osteoarthritis causes cartilage within a joint to break down. This is often a slow process and over time the underlying bone begins to change as well. It occurs more often in the hands, hips, and knees.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune and inflammatory disease. It occurs when your immune system attacks healthy cells in your body by mistake, beginning in the lining of your joints.

As with other chronic conditions, there are risk factors that you can control and others you cannot. Factors you have no control over include age, gender (arthritis is more common in women), and genetics.

Let's focus on what you can do to reduce your risk for developing arthritis.

- » **Maintain a healthy weight.** Extra weight places more stress on joints, particularly the hips and knees. Overweight and obesity increase your risk for developing almost all types of chronic disease. If you have arthritis and are overweight, losing as little as 10 to 12 pounds can help decrease pain and improve function.
- » **Protect your joints from injury.** Injuries or overuse of a joint can cause or worsen arthritis. During leisure and occupational activities, wear protective equipment, avoid repetitive movements, and enjoy activities that are easy on the joints like walking, bicycling, and swimming.

- » **Be physically active.** Being physically active can help delay the onset of arthritis and help delay and manage other chronic conditions. Stay as active as you can and remember that some physical activity is always better than none.
- » **Stop smoking.** Your risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis increases if you smoke, and it can make the disease worse. Smoking can also worsen chronic pain, cause other medical problems, and can make it more difficult to stay physically active.
- » **Be aware.** Most people that experience joint pain for the first time think they have a minor injury and not arthritis. Warning signs of arthritis include joint pain, stiffness, swelling, redness, warmth, and difficulty moving a joint through normal range of motion. If joint symptoms last for three days or more, or if you have several episodes of symptoms within a month, you should see your doctor.

Resources you may find helpful:

[www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/management.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/management.htm)

[www.arthritis.org/](http://www.arthritis.org/)

[www.verywellhealth.com/arthritis-diagnosis-4014203](http://www.verywellhealth.com/arthritis-diagnosis-4014203)

## Managing Pain from Arthritis

Arthritis is a leading cause of pain and disability worldwide. Here are some suggestions for your pain management toolbox.

**Stay ahead of your pain.** Learn all you can about your condition. Communicate with your doctor about any changes in pain and work together for the best pain management options.

**Practice daily routines.** Always pay attention to your joints, how they feel when you sit, stand, or do any kind of activity. Keep your joints moving with gentle stretches daily, practice good posture when sitting/standing/moving, and know your limits so you don't overdo.

**Exercise.** Movement can decrease pain and stiffness from arthritis, will improve your range of motion, strengthen your muscles, and increase your endurance. Choose activities that build the muscles around your joints but don't damage them. Low-impact activities like walking, cycling, and water exercise are good. Check with your local Extension office or health department to see if they offer Walk With Ease, a program designed especially for people with arthritis.

**Follow a medication plan.** There are many types of medications available for arthritis pain relief and most are relatively safe. You will need to work with your doctor to determine a medication plan specific for you.

**Try other therapies.** Relaxation therapy can be helpful. Try meditation, yoga, deep breathing, listening to music, being in nature. Massage, acupuncture, and use of heat and cold can help relieve pain temporarily.

**Pain is personal.** Each person feels pain differently and treatments for pain that work for one person may not work for you. There is also a strong mind-body connection, and your thoughts and emotions play a role in how you experience pain.

*Note: Last week, we talked about ways to strengthen bones by jumping, hopping, marching, etc. **If you have arthritis, you should avoid these high-impact activities.***



## What about vitamin D?

The Mediterranean diet is a good example of an anti-inflammatory diet that may reduce chronic pain caused by arthritis. Anti-inflammatory diets discourage eating processed foods and encourage plenty of vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, and foods that contain omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon.

Research shows that vitamin D may play a significant role in joint health. Studies link low levels of vitamin D with increased risk of both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis and imply that osteoarthritis progresses faster in people with inadequate vitamin D in their diets. It is worth noting the potential benefits from vitamin D, for arthritis prevention and management, as well as protection from osteoporosis, for immune system support, heart health, brain function, and more. The vitamin D story continues to unfold and is worth following. More than 75% of Americans may have low vitamin D levels, placing their health at risk.

How much vitamin D do you need? This is not an easy answer, because humans make and require different amounts, depending on age, skin color, latitude, and levels of body fat. Current recommendations for adults age 19 to 70 are 600 IU daily, and for adults age 71 and older, 800 IU per day. Visit [ksre-learn.com/MF2927](https://ksre-learn.com/MF2927) for more information on "Vitamin D: From Sunshine to Supplements," available from K-State Research and Extension.



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This newsletter developed by Sharolyn Flaming Jackson, Extension Specialist – Family and Consumer Sciences, K-State Research and Extension

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## Foil Baked Salmon

Makes 4 Servings

### Ingredients:

- 4 4-ounce salmon fillets
- 1 tablespoon grainy mustard
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced onion
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, chopped (or ½ teaspoon dried)
- 2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, chopped (or ½ teaspoon dried)
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

### Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Heat oven to 375°F.
3. Line a rimmed baking sheet with a large piece of aluminum foil and spray lightly with oil. Place salmon fillets in center of foil.
4. Rinse fresh herbs and lemon under cold running water. Chop herbs and juice lemon. In a small bowl, combine all ingredients (except salmon). Spread mixture over salmon.
5. Fold the sides of the aluminum foil up and over the top of the salmon until it is completely closed. If foil is not large enough, place a second piece on top and fold the edges under to seal. Leave a bit of room inside the foil for air to circulate.
6. Bake the salmon for 15 to 20 minutes until almost done, internal temperature of approximately 130°. Cooking time will vary based on the thickness of your salmon.
7. Remove salmon from the oven and carefully open the foil so the top of salmon fillets are uncovered. Change oven setting to broil, then return the salmon to the oven and broil for 3 minutes. The top of the salmon should be golden and the internal temperature of the fish should be 145°.

If there are leftovers, enjoy salmon the next day over a salad, mixed with pasta, or flake and scramble with eggs.

### Nutrition Information for 1 serving:

190 Calories; 9 g fat (0g trans fat, 1.5 g saturated fat); 2 g carbohydrates; 26 g protein; 1 g fiber; 290 mg sodium.