

## MYTHS ABOUT OSTEOARTHRITIS

- 1. I can't exercise with joint pain-** low impact exercises such as walking, swimming, Tai Chi and Yoga can actually lessen joint pain, strengthen muscles that support joints, and improve symptoms of OA. Many programs are available in your community to promote physical activity, like Walk with a Doc!
- 2. Arthritis is inevitable as I age-** The risk of developing OA does increase with age, but there are many things such as exercise, weight management, resting after joint-related injuries, and consulting with your doctor to come up with a prevention strategy, that you can do to lower your risk.
- 3. Diet doesn't affect your joints-** being overweight puts extra strain on your joints (1 pound of weight= 4 pounds of pressure on your knees), increasing the likelihood that you will develop OA and increasing the rate at which OA will progress. Eating a healthy diet helps you maintain a healthy weight.
- 4. Cracking knuckles causes osteoarthritis (OA)-** while cracking your knuckles can hurt tendons in your hands, it will not cause OA.
- 5. Active teenagers cannot get OA-** sports injuries can increase a teenager's chances of developing OA. Including specific training components that will improve strength in lower limbs and joints, balance, and athletic performance will reduce the risk of injury during practice and competition and, therefore, reduce the risk of developing OA later in life.
- 6. My job doesn't involve repetitive motion, so I won't get OA-** those who have jobs that involve repetitive motions are at greater risk of developing OA; however, people with desk jobs are also at an increased risk. Taking breaks occasionally to stretch and walk around can strengthen muscles and decrease this risk.
- 7. I don't need to see a doctor for joint pain-** It is incorrect to assume that nothing can be done to manage OA symptoms or that surgery is the only option. Exercise, weight loss, pain management techniques, alternative therapies, and medications (both prescription and over the counter) are all ways that joint pain can be managed. Consulting a doctor is the best way to find out how to best manage joint pain.
- 8. My parent had OA, so I will get it too-** While your chances of developing OA are greater if one of your parents had it, it is not definite. Regularly exercising and maintaining a healthy weight can decrease your risk of developing OA, or slow progression if you already have OA.
- 9. Weather can cause arthritis-** weather can't cause an otherwise healthy individual to develop arthritis, but damp climates can worsen the pain of someone who already has arthritis.
- 10. Arthritis is not a serious health problem-** Arthritis is the most common cause of disability in the United States, affecting over 52 million people -- about one in every five U.S. adults -- and their families. Osteoarthritis, specifically, affects over 30 million US adults. The economic burden is also large, with estimated costs of more than \$188 billion a year -- \$108 billion in lost wages, and \$80 billion in medical

care. Fortunately, you can make sure you're not an arthritis statistic. You can start today by eating right, exercising, and taking care of your body.

**References:**

everyday HEALTH website: 10 Myths About Osteoarthritis, accessed July 2016:

<http://www.everydayhealth.com/osteoarthritis-pictures/10-myths-about-osteoarthritis.aspx>

CDC website for Arthritis, accessed July 2016: <http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/index.htm>

OAAA Online Resource Library > Injury Prevention, accessed July 25, 2016: <https://oaaction.unc.edu/resource-library/injury-prevention/>

- [Consensus Opinion for on the Best Practice Features of Lower Limb Injury Prevention Programs - Executive Summary](#)
- [Consensus Opinion for Best Practice Features of Lower Limb Injury Prevention Programs \(LLIPP\)](#)