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Assistance. Advocacy. Answers on Aging.

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE NEWS

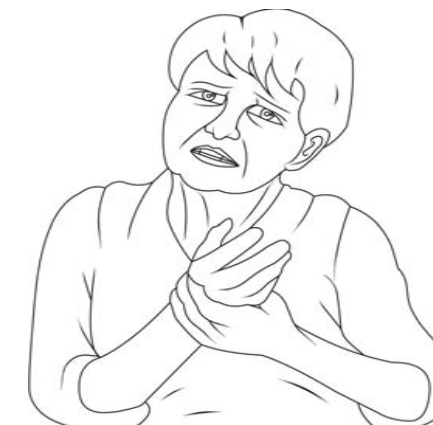
“CARING FOR YOU ... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Arthritis/Range of Motion (ROM) May Is National Arthritis Month

Arthritis is a term used to describe more than 100 different conditions that affect joints and other parts of the body. Arthritis is a very common chronic health problem, and it is the most common cause of disability in the U.S. About 46 million adults (one in five) in the U.S. have some form of arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia. Two-thirds of the people who have doctor-diagnosed arthritis are under the age of 65.

Although there is no cure for most types of arthritis, early diagnosis and good management are important, especially for inflammatory types of arthritis.

Arthritis causes pain, loss of movement, and sometimes swelling.



Main Types of Arthritis

Osteoarthritis is the “wear and tear” type, in which the slippery cartilage that covers the ends of bones in a joint wears out, causing pain and loss of movement as bone begins to rub against bone. It is the most common form of arthritis.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease, in which the person’s body begins to attack its own joints, causing inflammation and pain. Rheumatoid arthritis is one of the most serious and disabling types. It affects mostly women.

Exercise Helps Arthritis Pain

By encouraging exercise, you can help the person in your care lose weight and improve his overall health and fitness, as well as his arthritis symptoms.

A physical therapist, occupational therapist, exercise physiologist or doctor can recommend an exercise program for the person in your care.

Resource for You

Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP)

AFEP is a community-based recreational exercise program developed by the Arthritis Foundation. Trained AFEP instructors cover a variety of range of motion (ROM) and endurance-building activities, relaxation techniques and health education topics. All the exercises can be modified to meet the special needs of the person in your care. The program has been shown to improve functional ability, decrease depression, and increase confidence in one’s ability to exercise. For availability in your area, visit www.arthritis.org or call 800-283-7800.

Get More Vitamin K for Joint Health

To keep your knees and hands free of arthritis, have a small salad with your meals. The vitamin K in leafy greens could help reduce your risk of joint damage. In a study of older adults, those with higher blood levels of vitamin K were significantly less likely to develop the bone spurs and cartilage damage that are common in painful osteoarthritis. If you’re on blood thinners, check with your doctor about appropriate vitamin K intake.

Source: RealAge.com

The Ombudsman program can handle your concerns about areas such as elder abuse, client care, consumer rights, etc. For more information, call 1-800-582-7277.

For information about Ohio Medicaid programs or to report suspected Medicaid fraud, you may call the Ohio Medicaid Fraud Hotline at 1-800-324-8680.

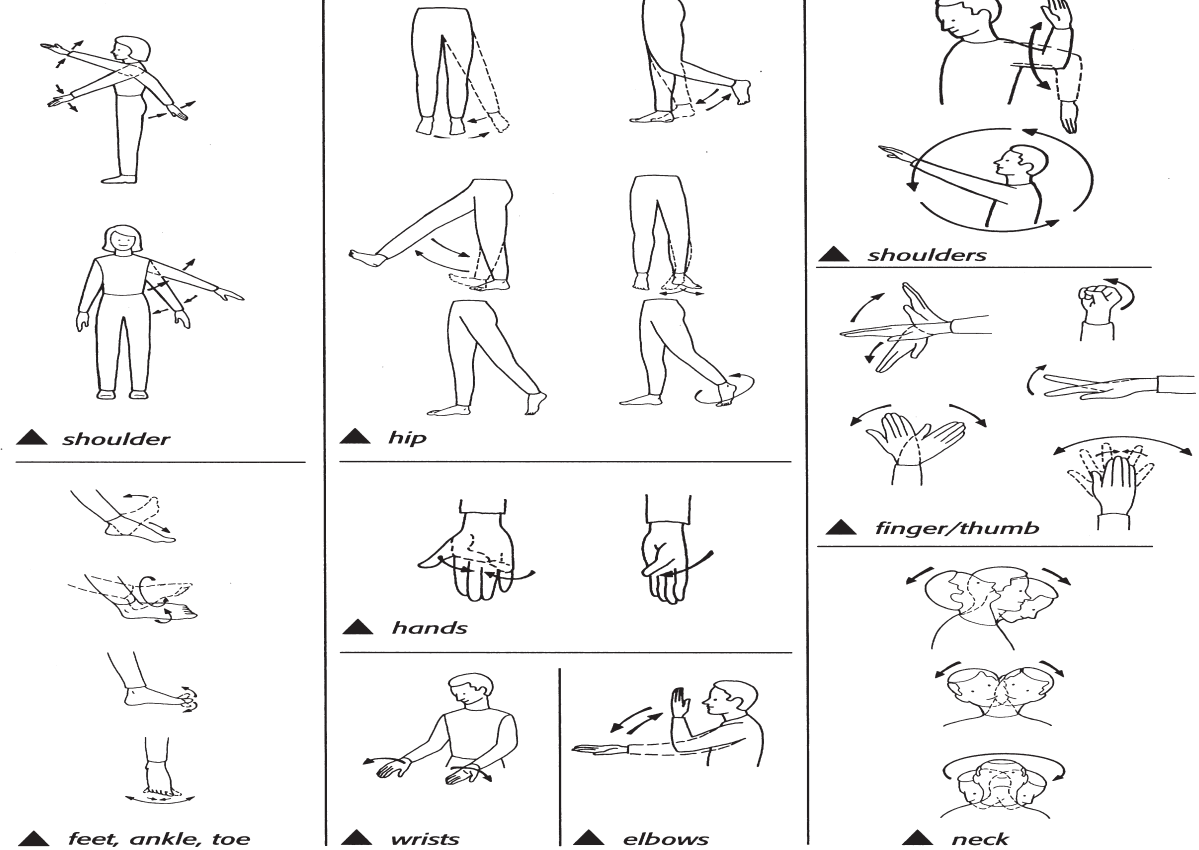
ROM (change of motion exercises) keep joints flexible by moving them as much as possible. ROM exercises relieve pain, maintain normal body alignments (positions), help prevent skin swelling and breakdown, and promote bone formation. If the person in your care is diagnosed with arthritis, it's important to encourage exercise *before* any joint deformity develops.

Endurance exercises, such as water exercise,

walking or riding a stationary bicycle, help keep the heart, lungs, bones and muscles strong. They help the body work more efficiently and increase a person's stamina, so that he can work longer without tiring as quickly.

Alternative exercise, such as yoga and Tai Chi, can be beneficial for people with arthritis. These forms of exercise can improve flexibility, increase muscle strength and help the person relax. Source: CDC; National Arthritis Foundation

Joints Used in ROM



Range of Motion Exercises (ROM)

Here are some things to do when you are asked to help the person in your care exercise at home:

- Communicate what you are doing.
- Use the flat palms of both hands, not the fingertips, to hold a body part.
- Take each movement only as far as the joint will go into a comfortable stretch. (Mild discomfort is okay, but it should go away quickly.)
- Do each exercise 3 to 5 times.
- Use slow, steady movements to help relax muscles and increase joint range.
- If joints are swollen and painful, exercise very gently.

Taking Care of Yourself

Source: The Comfort of Home: A Complete Guide for Caregivers

Foods and Shoes Can Soothe

Osteoarthritis. It would be wonderful if we could eat our way free of arthritis pain. So far, that hasn't happened. Make sure that you (and the person in your care) eat right and keep your weight down to reduce stress on joints. One pound of extra weight puts four extra pounds of stress on knee joints.

Eat mostly fruits, vegetables, whole grains and high-fiber foods. Two-thirds of your dinner plate should consist of vegetables and fruits, especially those high in vitamin C.



Shoes are an often missed source of knee pain. If you feel pain in the hips, knees, ankles, feet, or lower back, make sure your shoes fit properly and provide the proper support. Sometimes simply putting in a good pair of arch supports will make a big difference, but if there are special issues (such as diabetes or joint injuries). Always consult with a doctor first.

Inspiration

Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage.
~Anais Nin

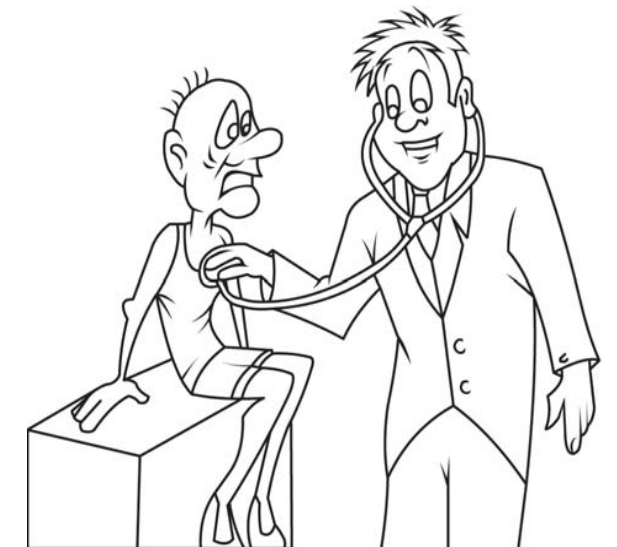
Don't Fall – Be Safe

While walking with the person in your care, make sure the sidewalks or pathways are level and free of obstructions, are well-lighted, and are separated from heavy traffic. Make sure that you are both wearing well-fitting, comfortable shoes.

Live Life Laughing!

Patient: *I can't sleep at night.*

Doctor: *Well, sleep during the day!*



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