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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Understanding and Preventing Osteoarthritis

General Info on Osteoarthritis

The process of aging greatly impacts the health of our joints. As we grow older, our joints become more susceptible to thinning, breakage, and wear and tear. This process is called "osteoarthritis".

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis today. It affects close to 12 percent of all Americans between the ages of 25 and 74 and is a debilitating condition that is often painful. Up to age 45, men have a higher incidence of osteoarthritis than women do but, by the age of 65, women are five times more likely to be affected by the condition than men.

Osteoarthritis most often affects weight-bearing joints, such as the hips and knees, and can be disabling. It can cause a loss of range-of-motion and severe pain. The ankles, elbows and shoulders are less susceptible. In response to the condition, the body develops new bone that is often not in the correct position or shape. The joints may appear misshapen or enlarged. As well, the cartilage filled space between the bones can thin significantly, interfering with the normal function or motion of the joint.

Osteoarthritis affects each person differently. Some people experience severe disability while others may not even know that they are experiencing cartilage loss. There are certain factors that contribute to osteoarthritis, including: aging, gender, genetics, previous injury to a joint, deformity of a joint, obesity, muscle weakness, and poor nutrition.

Steps for Prevention

Exercise can help to strengthen the muscles surrounding the joints. This helps to protect the joint against unnecessary stress. Joints that already have symptoms of osteoarthritis can also benefit from exercise as strong muscles can help to prevent further damage and decrease pain by distributing the weight of the body across both the joints and the muscles.

Maintaining a healthy weight, beginning in adulthood, is the best preventive measure one can take in battling osteoarthritis. If you are even twenty or thirty pounds overweight, that results in a significant increase in the amount of stress your weight-bearing joints undergo with every step you take. Even if osteoarthritis has begun, losing weight will reduce the stress on the joints and slow its progression.

Chiropractic care is a safe and effective treatment for Osteoarthritis. Although it is

impossible for someone to actually “fix” the damage done in osteoarthritis, chiropractic care can help restore proper mobility and function to the affected joints. Basically, chiropractors believe that the better or more efficiently your joints work, the better they will feel, and the longer they will last. If you have any further questions on how chiropractic care may help address your osteoarthritis and restore your quality of life, please contact my office directly.