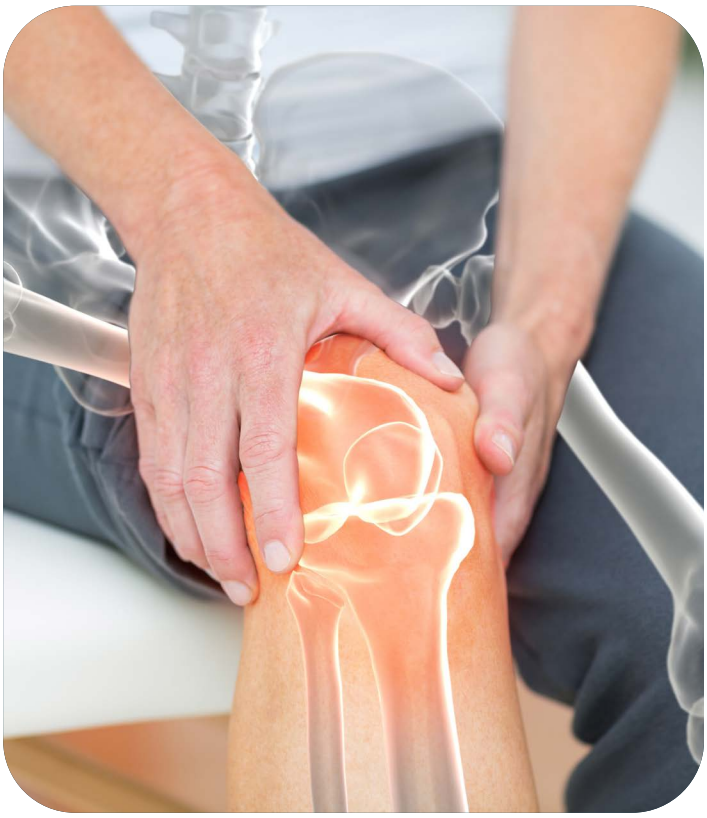
Your Guide to Arthritis

Learn more about how to prevent, recognize, and manage arthritis.

DC HEALTH
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

What is Arthritis?

- **Arthritis** is swelling or tenderness of your joints.
- Arthritis may feel like joint pain, stiffness, swelling, redness, or decreased range of motion/ movement.
- There are many different types of arthritis, but the two most common are:
  1. **Osteoarthritis** is damage in the joint's cartilage, or the cushions at the end of the bones.
  2. **Rheumatoid** arthritis is when the body's immune system attacks



How do I know if I'm at Risk?

Certain factors raise your risk of arthritis:

- Family members with arthritis, including parents or siblings.
- Age (50 years or older).
- Women are more likely than men to have rheumatoid arthritis.
- Previous joint injury.
- Overweight or physically inactive.

Your Guide to Arthritis

How can Arthritis be Managed or Treated?

Arthritis can be treated with over-the-counter medicines, physical therapy, prescription medications, and surgery.

There are many ways to manage pain from arthritis:

- Talk to your **health care provider** if you have symptoms and to learn self-management skills.
- **Regular exercise** can help keep joints flexible, especially swimming and water aerobics.
- Excess weight puts extra stress on weight-bearing joints. **Losing weight** may increase your mobility and limit future joint injury.
- **Heating pads or ice packs** may help relieve pain from arthritis.
- **Assistive devices** such as canes, shoe inserts, walkers, raised toilet seats, and others can help protect joints and improve your ability to perform daily tasks.

Resources

For tips and resources to help you build and maintain healthy habits:

» **LivingWell DC:** Find tools to help you eat healthy, exercise, sleep well, visit the doctor, and quit smoking: livingwell.dc.gov/page/go-go-dc

» **Build Healthy Habits:** Find free nutrition and physical activity classes by the DC SNAP-Education team on the Event Calendar (livingwell.dc.gov/events) or by emailing info.snap-ed@dc.gov

» **DPR:** Find activities and programs for any fitness level provided by the DC Department of Parks and Recreation: dprprograms.splashthat.com

» **How to Manage Arthritis:** Learn about how to prevent arthritis, the different types of arthritis, and how to manage arthritis at CDC Arthritis: cdc.gov/arthritis/index.html

» **More Resources:** Learn more about arthritis, how to manage arthritis, and arthritis treatments from the Arthritis Foundation: arthritis.org