

## **Do You Live With Arthritis or Chronic Pain?**

Do you wake up with stiffness or soreness that improves only once you start moving? Do you have stiff joints and sore muscles? Have you been diagnosed with osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, or fibromyalgia? Are you frustrated that your pain is not improving with mainstream medication? You will be happy to learn that there are many natural and effective ways to reduce pain and inflammation in the body.

Let food be your medicine (Hippocrates: The Father of Medicine). There are some foods that promote inflammation in the body and others that are anti-inflammatory. I often recommend an anti-inflammatory diet to patients. This involves avoidance of certain foods such as red meat, dairy, sugar and white flour. Also, vegetables from the “nightshade family” should be avoided. These include white potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, zucchini and eggplant. Many of my patients feel better within days of changing their diets and are surprised and delighted by the instant results.

I also recommend to patients with inflammation in the body as well as digestive issues to do a food allergy panel to determine food sensitivities. This is a blood test, and once the food sensitivities are isolated they are removed from the diet for at least three months to see results. Food toxins (from foods that you are sensitive to) can wreak havoc on the whole body leading to inflammation, pain and arthritis. Regular cleansing is important to rid the body of toxins. Talk to your naturopathic doctor about easy cleansing programs to get your body tuned up. Isn't it sad that we treat our cars better than we treat our bodies?

There are also certain vitamins that I recommend to speed up the healing process. For osteoarthritis, I recommend glucosamine sulphate. Over 300 scientific studies indicate that glucosamine sulphate is better than the non steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) such as Ibuprofen, Naprosyn and Aspirin in controlling the pain of arthritis. Magnesium is a wonderful muscle relaxant and excellent in the treatment of fibromyalgia. Fish oils are a “must” for any kind of inflammation in the body as it promotes your natural anti-inflammatory prostaglandins.

Bodywork is important in speeding up the healing process. For example, acupuncture and Bowen therapy (a hands-on therapy involving very gentle challenges to muscles and soft tissues throughout the body) are highly effective in reducing pain. Of course, chiropractic adjustments and massage therapy are also effective treatments of choice. The body is like an instrument that needs regular tuning, love, and attention.

I see these symptoms every day in my practice, and there are very real changes you can make. You can live a healthy, pain-free life if you are ready to make some changes! Despite what your doctor may tell you, you don't have to live with chronic pain anymore!