

Osteoarthritis Myths

My X-ray/scan shows arthritis, it must be bad

There is little correlation between signs of degenerative changes on an X-ray or scan and the symptoms a person may experience. When considering arthritis your health care professional should assess you as a whole person.

Arthritis runs in my family!

There is a genetic component to some types of arthritis, however we think this is only a small part of the picture. We think that lifestyle plays a much bigger part in symptoms and progression than anything else. This includes exercise, diet, weight, smoking and many other factors.

I have arthritis: I will definitely need a joint replacement.

Lots of people who have arthritis will never have a joint replacement because, either it is not symptomatic enough or they are able to manage their symptoms. Joint replacement is only one option in managing arthritis and isn't right for everyone. Most people will manage their symptoms with medication and lifestyle changes

Doing exercise will make my arthritis worse.

Absolutely not, we have good evidence that exercise is important to keep the joint cartilage healthy. We think that inactivity may contribute to arthritic symptoms worsening and it will certainly lead to weakness and stiffness of an arthritic joint. There is also evidence to show that regular exercise can slow the progression of arthritis and minimise symptoms. Plus exercise is fun and good for your whole body.

I will need injections, braces or special insoles.

We have little evidence to support any treatments aside from medication, exercise, weight loss and physiotherapy. Any other treatments need to be considered on an individual basis and it is best to discuss this with your physiotherapist.