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#50 - Help for Arthritis

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Keys to Total Health

PRODUCED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION, SCHOOL OF HEALTH

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Help for Arthritis

Millions suffer from arthritis. More personal discomfort and disability is produced by arthritis than any chronic disorder. Arthritis can strike at any age. It is estimated that nearly 200,000 Americans are completely disabled from arthritis. The cost to the American people is an estimated two hundred million dollars annually. To avoid becoming a chronic invalid, the victim of arthritis must seek early treatment. There are many kinds of arthritis. We shall discuss three major types in this lesson.

Man is not the only creature troubled with arthritis. This disease affects many other members of the animal kingdom. It is becoming very common among dogs and cats and is also quite prevalent in horses and other, larger animals. Jellyfish are fortunate to escape this disease, basically because they have no joints to become involved; for arthritis is a joint disease.

This lesson will concentrate on prevention of arthritic disease. Treatment should be under medical supervision for arthritis is a complex affliction.

Types of Arthritis

The common types of arthritis are rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, and gout. These are the ones that we shall be primarily concerned with in this lesson.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is three times as common in women as in men. Inflammation and swelling of the joints occurs. An infectious factor apparently combines with several other factors, for example malnutrition, disorders of endocrine glands, and maladjustment to life, to produce this condition. The latter is now receiving increasing attention as a cause. Newest evidence would indicate that physical or emotional shock, injuries, fatigue, cold and dampness, undue stress--all may play a part in the development of this disease. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Proverbs 17:22) If joint pain is being experienced in the extremities--hands, toes, shoulders, elbows--one is advised to seek competent medical help very early. One of the most effective and inexpensive medicines that physicians and rheumatologists will prescribe is plain, common aspirin. The brand of aspirin is not of consequence; aspirin seems to have power to check and reduce inflammation which causes swelling in the joints and also helps ease the pain. Care should be taken, however, for some people cannot tolerate the amounts of aspirin sometimes prescribed as a medication for rheumatoid

arthritis. Medication should be under the supervision of a competent physician who will be alert to individual tolerances. Hot baths and hot fomentations are useful and often effective in halting the onslaught of the joint damage when it is in its acute or attacking state. Careful observation of people who are suffering this disease would reveal that the body's immune system quite likely plays an important role in the progression of arthritis; therefore, whatever will strengthen the immune system of the body should assist the body in its battle against the symptoms of this disease. What are those things that assist the body's immune system? Right away we would say rest. Getting rest is of crucial importance to the arthritic. Nutrition has to play a very important role in combating any disease where the body's immune system is being relied upon.

Because the human body is designed to operate best on natural foods, a victim of arthritis should take great care in avoiding highly refined foods, those which contain high concentrations of refined sugar, refined flour and other products which are nutritionally very poor.

Exercise To The Rescue

Exercise is considered extremely important to the arthritic; however, the type of exercise should be chosen which will not do damage to the joints. Vigorous, motor-type exercise should be avoided. However, it is very important to keep the body in its very best physical condition. This can usually be achieved through walking or work on the exercycle, swimming (preferably in warm water), bicycle riding, hiking in the hills, and gardening; these are among the very best exercises for the arthritic.

Here are some general rules to follow that will help you in carrying out your exercise program:

1. *Frequency.* As a rule, you should do your set of exercises at least two times a day and each time you do them, each exercise should be performed three to ten times. Several short periods of exercise during each day are better than one long one. You will find that frequent exercising prevents stiffening of your joints.
2. *Start.* It is best to start exercising very gently and slowly. The amount of exercise may be increased gradually each day. By doing this, you will learn how much exercise you can tolerate.
3. *Discomfort.* During your exercises you are likely to feel discomfort, even pain. This is to be expected. However, if you have pain which lasts more than an hour after finishing

an exercise period, report it to your doctor.

4. *Gradual Improvement.* Exercises which are performed too vigorously or too often may increase pain and damage in your joints. The emphasis should be on gradual improvement of joint function, however long it takes, and not on the amount of exercise you can perform.

5. *Assistance.* You may need help doing some of your exercises, especially at first. But you should perform as many of them as possible yourself. Your helper, when you have one, should not use force.

6. *When Joints Are Inflamed.* If your joints are acutely inflamed and painful, your exercises must be gentle, with a minimum of motion of the involved joints. A helper may be needed. The emphasis at these times is on keeping correct posture and position because this protects your joints and helps prevent deformity.

7. *When Arthritis Is Less Acute.* If your arthritis is less acute and your joints are not too swollen or painful, your exercise program will concentrate on strengthening muscles and on maintaining--or regaining--your ability to perform usual daily activities.

8. *When Arthritis Is Mild.* If your arthritis is at a stage where you have relatively little joint swelling and relatively mild pain, your exercise program will emphasize procedures for increasing strength, flexibility, and endurance for work activities.

9. *Rest.* Remember that adequate rest must be part of your exercise program.

10. *A Word To The Wise.* It is easier to prevent deformities in the first place than to correct them later. Even when your progress seems discouragingly slow, try to be patient and stick faithfully to your program

Avoid joint strain and pain. The housewife suffering from arthritis should not even attempt to twist off difficult lids from fruit jars and other containers. Hard-to twist can openers should be avoided or used by some other member of the family. For, after the inflammatory stage has occurred, much of the damage has been done. Putting a joint under undue physical stress and strain will only cause further damage.

A Total Health Approach

To gain the greatest amount of advantage against arthritis, the victim must look at it from a total health standpoint. Incorporating all of nature's doctors which are available, E.G. White in the book *Ministry of Healing*, page 127, states, "Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power, these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them. . . . The use of natural remedies requires an amount of care and effort that many are not willing to give. Nature's process of healing and upbuilding is gradual. And to the impatient it seems slow. The surrender of hurtful indulgences requires sacrifice, but in the end it will be found that nature, untrammelled, does her work wisely and well. Those who persevere in obedience to her laws will reap the reward in health of body and health of mind." So, as we look at nature's remedies, let us not overlook fresh air (getting out and exercising in the fresh air is the very best), filling those lungs with fresh oxygen so that good blood can be manufactured to circulate throughout the body. Sunshine is a very important element here, and the person with arthritis enjoys warmth and likes to get out into the sun. Freezing cold and windy conditions should be avoided.

Outlook

We must not overlook the element of trust in Divine power, for we have this promise in Scripture: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health." (III John 2) This also is a concern which bothers the arthritic victim. When care has been taken to eat a proper diet, in which the supply of vitamins, minerals, proteins, vitamin C, and iron is adequate, and the person is doing all that he can to have fresh fruits and vegetables in as natural a form as possible, there is still something left to do. Look up and trust. Why not claim the promises that are in the Bible? There are over 3500 promises and many of them have to do with health. It makes such a tremendous difference how we think and how we handle our stresses. When God in the Holy Scriptures invites, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," (Isaiah 45:22) He is not just talking about spiritual cleansing and salvation. He is also speaking of freedom from disease, for He has also promised, "I will put none of these diseases upon thee." (Exodus 15:26) We must not fall short of reaching these promises by faith-placing trust in the power of God.

Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis comes with aging and impaired circulation. Injuries to joints, overweight and overexertion are all causative factors. Osteoarthritis of the spine is very common. Osteoarthritis is manifested by a degeneration of cartilage and bone in the parts of the joints and an overproduction of bony tissue in other parts. It reduces the range of joint motion and mobility but seldom do joints grow together even in the vertebrae. A surprising degree of osteoarthritis may exist without producing any pain, although there is no cure known for this form of

arthritis. Especially is the application of heat helpful, and gentle massage restores circulation to the joints. In many cases of arthritis it has been observed that poor circulation to the joint area, such as the hands, has preceded an arthritic condition; therefore, it is thought that the slow-down of circulation may assist the onset of this disease. Physical therapists today stress the importance of good posture. How important it is while working at one's desk to sit straight and not strain the joints of the body by improper body position.

Gout

Gout is caused by a metabolic imbalance due to an improper diet and results in a swelling of the extremities. Deposits of uric acid in the joints, owing to the high uric acid blood level, cause the swelling and pain. Gout is much more common than many realize, and it is growing in prevalence. Although any joint of the body may be affected, the joints generally affected are those of the ankles, feet, wrists and hands. Although gout is usually limited to those over 35, it is more severe when it afflicts younger people. It is more common in males than females. Gout is more prevalent in well-to-do families that indulge in rich food and alcoholic drinks.

Treatment

Your physician can help and guide you in the treatment of this particular disease. In addition, hot fomentations, cold compresses, and a good diet can aid in controlling and reducing pain and joint damage. Fats, especially, must be avoided; also, alcoholic beverages, including beer. The victim should eat liberally of fruits and vegetables with extra vitamin B-complex and iron, using milk and eggs sparingly. Remember, professional help is needed in combating any arthritic condition. Remission may be experienced by many sufferers of arthritis if help is obtained early in the disease.

Quack Cures

Arthritics are more prone to consult quacks than any other group. Millions of dollars are lost yearly on fake cures supported by wild claims and convincing testimonies which do not produce any worthwhile results. Arthritis is not a simple disease but a collection of different ailments with diverse causes and complex results. Some forms are completely curable while others are not. Some can be helped by early diagnosis and treatment, but if left untreated, irreversible damage may be obtained. Time is a very important factor.

Ancient Greek Treatment

Some of the treatments the ancient Greeks used sound quite good to us today. They treated arthritis with hydrotherapy, sunlight, local heat, and massage. These methods are still excellent forms of treatment. Heat increases the supply of blood. Massage provides flexibility. And again, on the bottom line, we would say that trust is a very important part-keeping the morale and the spirits up; trusting in Divine power beyond and above that which we can do. God would expect the sufferer to do for himself all that he possibly can and leave the rest to Him.

Nature's Doctors

SUNSHINE



FRESH AIR



REST



NUTRITION



WATER



EXERCISE



TRUST

HELP FOR ARTHRITIS

1. What are some common forms of arthritis? 1. _____

2. _____ 3. _____

2. Name some factors associated with contracting rheumatoid arthritis.

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

3. Why is it dangerous to use aspirin on a regular basis without a physician's guidance? _____

4. List activities which are beneficial in limiting the harmful effects of arthritis.

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

5. What precaution is necessary in exercise? _____

6. Can you state some recommendations for dietary control of arthritis? 1. _____

2. _____ 3. _____

7. What is the cause of gouty arthritis? _____

8. What special precautions are useful for its control? _____

9. List some ancient Greek treatments still useful today.

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone _____