

ARTHRITIS and related problems with acidity – Some Helpful Hints

This brief handout will give you some basic information on coping with arthritis and how to begin to do something to reverse it. It is not the first and last word on the subject. There are many books available if you would like to read into the subject more deeply.

Why do people get arthritis ?

- Hereditary reasons – the tendency is in the family; “constitutional”
- Dietary reasons – too much of the wrong foods or allergies to certain foods
- Poor elimination – kidneys, bowels, skin under-functioning
- Lack of decent water – some people drink *no* water at all
- Emotional reasons – shock, grief, resentment, bitterness, anger
- Physical reasons – perhaps triggered by a fall, accident etc
- Stress – as things become more intolerable, we cope less and less well (adrenal glands ‘flat’)
- All or some of the above – everyone is different

What can be done to help ?

1. Heredity – It is at this level that Homoeopathy is often more helpful than any other therapy because it literally reaches the parts that other therapies can't. By treating you as the ‘sort’ of person that you are (i.e. one with a *tendency* to arthritis) with certain deep-acting remedies, it is possible to relieve many people of this distressing and painful condition. BUT to simply take homoeopathic remedies without looking at diet, lifestyle etc is rarely enough. We have to look at the problem as a whole. Other therapies can be tremendously useful, as you will see, amongst which are Acupuncture and Herbalism.
2. Most people with arthritis tend to eat many of the foods that trigger off or make arthritis worse. By taking the simple steps necessary to avoid these foods it is possible to take quite a load off the system, thus allowing the body to get on top of things again. (See the list overleaf.)
3. As well as putting the correct food into the body it is important to get the waste products *out* of the body as quickly and efficiently as possible. For the **bowels** to function properly we need sufficient water and roughage (or we become constipated); we need to chew properly; not drink with meals; and to be relaxed when settling down to eat. **Kidney** function needs to be as efficient as possible. Nettle tea can be very helpful. (See over). Our **skin** also helps our bodies to eliminate waste products. Skin brushing is very easy, pleasant and beneficial. (See over). Aromatherapy massage can very gently help the system to clear the toxic build-up.
4. Bodies are made up of roughly 80% water; brains are roughly 90% water. If we do not drink enough *plain (preferably bottled) water* our bodies are forced to store the toxins which cannot be eliminated; these are often stored in joints and muscles. These toxins are very acid, sometimes crystalline, and cause all the pain. If we do not drink enough our bodies will actually be forced to store water in the tissues and joints in an attempt to dilute the toxins. (See ‘Water’)
5. In many cases, one of the factors often contributing to arthritis is the emotional side of things: i.e. if we cannot come to terms with a death, a matrimonial betrayal, different shocks or frights (a near-fatal road accident) or any of the traumas that humans experience. Dealing with these is one of homoeopathy's great strengths. Homoeopaths call these things “NBWS”'s “Never been well since” Homoeopathy can help one to come to terms with the past and move on.
6. Physical shocks can also be a “NBWS” reason lying behind a case of arthritis. Again, homoeopathy can help the body to recover and move on. Chiropractic treatment, to optimise the way that the body works, can be very useful. Rebounding (see over) can also help.
7. Stress should always be addressed; hypnotherapy and counselling, self-help techniques, homoeopathic medicines, massage, aromatherapy and reflexology, chiropractic, shiatsu all these can be used to help us to function more comfortably. Assertiveness (or rather the lack of it) often lies behind many problems which cause us stress. (Ask for one of my leaflets on Assertiveness.)

To sum up: rarely is an arthritis case as a result of a simple, single problem; on the contrary, it is more a question of a bit of some and sometimes a lot of another. The problem must be dealt with as a whole – holistically.

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FOODS THAT CAN UPSET ARTHRITIS

Here are some dietary pointers. The following list is not exhaustive but these foods are either acidic in their own right or leave an acid waste product after digestion has occurred. Naturally, if there is a food to which you are allergic, this, too can flare up your arthritis. On the left are the major problem foods; on the right some suggested alternatives.

	<u>EAT NONE (or LESS)</u>			<u>EAT MORE</u>	
‘BAD’ FOODS (The major culprits)	Pork	Oranges*	‘GOOD’ FOODS	Chicken / Lamb	Grapes
	Beef	Orange juice		Fish	Grape juice
	Cheese	Rhubarb		Try goat products	Non-acid fruits
	Milk	Strawberries		Rice or soya milk	Grains-not wheat !
	Tomatoes	Sugar		Vegetables	Fructose
	Wheat	Alcohol		Rye bread	Water !

* Okay as long as they are ripe and are NOT combined with starches. Don’t drink ‘Pure’ Orange Juice, however. Squeeze your own! Also, think about it ... how MANY oranges would you sit down and eat in one sitting?

IMPROVING ELIMINATION

Bowels : Proper chewing is really important (ESSENTIAL !) for digestion. It stimulates peristalsis (the wave-like contractions in the intestines, which pass the food and stool along the gastrointestinal tract). If we do not chew properly, we are literally relying on one meal to push the previous one through the system !

In addition to chewing, there are various proprietary products for improving the way that the bowels work. Probably the best is *LINUSIT GOLD*, available from good Health Food shops. 1 level tablespoon of these organically grown linseeds can be soaked in a cup of water overnight and then taken once or twice daily until a good rhythm is established; thereafter they can be taken as required. *SLIPPERY ELM POWDER* is also very good : 1 level tablespoon dissolved in warm water, stirred and swallowed immediately – or cooked like semolina if you prefer, in a little water – taken twice daily can be very soothing and lubricates the intestines.

Kidneys : *NETTLE TEA* is very soothing to the kidneys, and is Nature’s gentle diuretic (makes you pee); it also has the effect of taking down arthritic/gouty inflammation. Ideally, a handful of fresh baby leaves (not the old, big leaves) should be picked, washed and placed in a bowl. Pour on a pint of boiling water, cover quickly and leave to steep for 10 minutes. Strain and drink. Dried nettle teabags can be bought at health food shops.

Skin : Skin brushing, with a natural, soft bristle brush (obtainable from the Body Shop) helps to invigorate the skin, helps to shift lymphatic fluid out of the system (helping to detoxify the tissues) and thus to generally lighten the body’s toxic load. Brush gently always towards the heart (not back and forth) before showering or bathing as often as you like. Do not brush anywhere where there is an open skin rash. Do not use a nylon-bristled brush or a loofah, as these will scratch the skin.

“Rebounding” (mini trampolining) : Unlikely as this sounds for arthritic people, it is a gentle way of exercising without hurting the body. It clears old stagnant lymphatic fluid out of the system by gently pumping the muscles. It is also said to be useful for combating osteoporosis, as it also gently ‘bends’ the bones, encouraging new calcium to be reabsorbed.

Pay attention, though – don’t fall off and hurt yourself. (Argos sells them – roughly £20.)

WATER – CALCULATING HOW MUCH WE NEED EVERY DAY :

There is a simple equation to do this ...

Work out your body weight (in pounds): divided by 2 = No. of fluid ounces needed (20 fluid ounces = 1 pint)

Example : 10 stones = 10 x 14 = 140 lbs divided by 2 = 70 fl ozs = 3.5 pints = roughly 7 glasses
 14 stones = 14 x 14 = 196 lbs divided by 2 = 98 fl ozs = 5 pints = roughly 10 glasses

While at first this seems an impossible target when you first try it, gradually you will regain a natural thirst. If you are having kidney problems, these will need to be addressed before you can achieve your target with ease. Drink well about 15 minutes before meals ... we usually manage a good litre of water before eating our breakfast 15 minutes later ... after each meal don’t drink anything for 2 hours, then start again, making sure that whatever you have drunk between meals, you drink some more 15 minutes before the meal, then wait another 2 hours., etc. **See the document: “The Importance of Water”**