



Osteoarthritis Of The Knee

Osteoarthritis of the knee is perhaps the most common type of arthritis in the human body. While arthritis can occur in almost any joint some joints such as the knee seem to be particularly affected. It has been estimated that 10 million Americans have osteoarthritis of the knee. The majority of those affected are in the over 45 age group.

Causes:

- There may be an inherited tendency to develop osteoarthritis.
- Joint injuries.
- Being overweight increases osteoarthritis risk.

What happens when arthritis occurs?

The tough cushion coverage over the ends of the bones becomes worn down and the bones may actually begin to touch or rub against each other in the joint. This leads to pain, swelling, stiffness and the formation of bone spurs adjacent to the joint.

The cushion covering the bone loses its ability to function as a shock absorber and reduce the impact on the joint. When some wear begins, the remaining cushion wears down even faster and sooner or later some places may have bone exposed allowing the bone to grind against the bone on the opposite side of the joint.

How can arthritis of the knee be treated?

- Anti-inflammatory medications such as the popular Vioxx, Celebrex and many others.
- Exercise such as walking to the limits of a persons tolerance.
- Pain relieving lubrication type injections such as Hyalgan and Synvisc.
- Anti-inflammatory injection of a Cortisone type substance such as Kenalog or Celestone. These can be very helpful in temporarily decreasing inflammation in the joint.
- Arthroscopic surgery might be needed if the arthritis is mild and there are mechanical problems in the knee such as a torn meniscus (cartilage).
- Total knee joint replacement for advanced end stage arthritis changes in the knee. (See On Line Orthopaedics web site article entitled Total Knee Replacement).

Addendum

High heels do not increase the risk of osteoarthritis of the knee in women.

It has often been thought that wearing high heels increase the risk of osteoarthritis of the knee in women. Research has indicated that excessive weight gain before the age of forty is the real cause.

It has been known that osteoarthritis of the knee is twice as common in women by the time they reach 65 as in men. It has often been speculated that high heel shoes in



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women could be responsible in part at least for this difference.

A study of 111 women between the ages of 50 and 70 was conducted. 29 of these women were awaiting knee replacement surgery.

All of the women were closely questioned about when they started wearing high heel shoes, what type of shoes they were, and how often they wore them. Other questions included occupational activity, smoking habits, hormone replacement therapy and previous injuries.

It was determined that wearing high heel shoes was not associated with the risk of osteoarthritis in the group of women studied. The cause of arthritis seemed to be related to physically demanding work, previous knee injury, heavy smoking and being overweight. Women in the study between the ages of 36 and 40 with an excessive body mass index of 25 or above had a greatly increased risk of developing osteoarthritis.



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Please consult Dr. Haverbush or a physician for specific treatment recommendations.

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