Understanding Arthritis

Know What Arthritis Is

- Arthritis: “arth = joint; “itis” = inflammation
- #1 cause of disability in the United States
- 43 million or 1 in 5 Americans have doctor-diagnosed arthritis
- Common types of arthritis:
  - Osteoarthritis (21 million) – breakdown of the cushioning tissue, called cartilage, in the joints. This is the most common form of arthritis. It affects the weight-bearing joints of the knees, hips and lower back as well as the hands.
  - Rheumatoid Arthritis (2.1 million) - causes inflammation of the lining of joint tissue, leading to deformity.
  - Juvenile Arthritis (300,000) - produces serious complications in severe cases or causes few problems in very mild cases.
  - Fibromyalgia - pain syndrome involving muscles and muscle attachment areas.
  - Gout - rheumatic disease causing sudden, severe episodes of pain and tenderness, redness, warmth and swelling in the joints.
  - Lupus - affects the skin and body tissues and possibly organs such as kidneys, lungs or heart.

Know the Warning Signs of Arthritis

If you have any of the following symptoms, see your doctor:

- Swelling in one or more joints.
- Morning stiffness lasting 30 minutes or longer.
- Persistent joint pain or tenderness.
- Inability to move a joint in the normal way.
- Weight loss, fever or weakness, and joint pain that cannot be explained.

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