

Aching, painful joints? Natural ways to treat arthritis

by Mary-Jane Sharratt of Sussex Homeopathy

Arthritis is a generic term which is often used to describe both rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. Each condition differs in its medical definition and treatment but the holistic treatment can apply to both conditions and to gout as well.

Arthritis may be caused by one or a combination of hormonal imbalance, allergies, injury, stress, hereditary factors. Lifestyle changes, particularly regarding diet, can have a significant beneficial influence on the symptoms.

When the diet is too high in protein there can be a resultant build up in uric acid around the joints (this is particularly the case with gout). For all arthritic conditions, an improvement in bowel and kidney function will enable the body to excrete excess uric acid from the body.

The first step is to make dietary changes and most people experience a radical improvement in their symptoms just from making these changes. It may seem difficult to cut out certain foods, but after just two weeks the benefits will be apparent.

Have as little as possible of these foods	These foods are beneficial
Red meat Alcohol Processed foods (including biscuits, cakes, white bread, white rice) Refined sugar, including chocolate Tea Coffee Root vegetables, including potatoes Tomatoes	Chicken Fish Green vegetables Salad (dandelion leaves are excellent – and free!) Seeds Eggs Nuts Wholemeal bread Brown rice Fruit Herbal tea
Dietary changes should be accompanied by an increase in water consumption to help the body excrete excess uric acid	
It is also recommended to take daily baths with two handfuls of Epsom salts to assist the cleansing process. Essential oils of fennel, juniper and cypress can be added to the bath (dilute them first in a small amount of carrier oil, such as grapeseed)	

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The following supplements can also help to relieve the symptoms of arthritis:

- Glucosamine – this helps to repair damaged cartilage
- Essential fatty acids – in the form of evening primrose oil, linseed oil, hemp oil or fish oil (500 to 1,000 mgs a day)
- Vitamin B5 can greatly assist with arthritis, but should not be used alone over a long period – it is better to supplement with a good quality B Complex containing all the B vitamins
- Cider vinegar and honey – a teaspoon of each in hot water three times daily
- Vitamin C – 1,000 mg daily

Homeopathic remedies can provide highly effective relief from symptoms. These are some of the commonly used ones, all of which are available from local pharmacies:

Rhus Tox	Suitable for arthritis sufferers who are stiff when they first move but the pain then eases with continued movement. Symptoms are better during a warm bath and worse in cold or damp weather
Bryonia	The sufferer wants to be totally still, possibly applying very firm pressure to painful part. The joints are red and shiny.
Ledum	The affected part of the body is stiff and swollen with a bruised appearance, and feels better if it is kept cold (e.g. putting feet into cold water).
Arnica	The limbs ache, especially after exercise, and have a bruised feeling
These remedies should be purchased in the 6c potency and taken twice a day for 10 days. If only the 30c potency is available, take one a day for 10 days.	

Professional homeopathic treatment is a highly effective way of managing arthritis, strengthening the immune system and treating the cause of the problem, which in turn reduces the severity of the arthritic pains. Prescribed homeopathic remedies can also help to eliminate an excess of uric acid from the joints which will help the symptoms.

Many people find that their lives are restricted by arthritic conditions, but with a combination of homeopathic treatment, gentle exercise, supplements and dietary changes, considerable improvements can be experienced.

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