

September Parish Nurse Corner - Arthritis Awareness Month

1 in 5 Canadians live with arthritis!

What is Arthritis:

- Arthritis is a term used for a group over 100 diseases that are characterized by redness and swelling of the joints and other areas of the body.
- This swelling can damage the tissue in the joints, in addition to causing pain and stiffness.
- The inflammation often occurs in the hips, knees, spine and weight bearing joints, but can also occur in the fingers.
- Arthritis symptoms can be mild or severe.

There are two types of Arthritis:

Osteoarthritis – This is the form that most frequently affects Canadians. It is the result of the body's attempt to repair damaged joint tissues resulting from the everyday wear and tear on the body. It results in a break down of the cartilage layer that protects the end of the bones in the joints. Factors that relate to development of Osteoarthritis include age, obesity, gender, occupation, participation in certain sports, history of joint surgery and genetics.

Inflammatory Arthritis – In this form of arthritis, the joint pain is a result of inflammation rather than the wearing down of the cartilage layer. Most inflammatory arthritis forms are a type of auto immune disease, where the body's immune system attacks its own healthy tissue by mistake. This can result in pain, stiffness, overall fatigue, reduced mobility and damage to the joints. If not treated, this type of arthritis will progress more quickly than osteoarthritis.



Support in Living with Arthritis:

The Arthritis Society of Canada has a variety of resources on their website. This includes online presentations, tips for navigating your healthcare, and finding community supports including arthritis specialists and government programs. <https://arthritis.ca/support-education>

Phone Resources: 1) free phone line is available for answer questions you may have. 1-800-321-1433 – press “2” to speak with a peer volunteer. 2) Local Arthritis Society office in London available at 519- 433- 2191.