



Indiana Chapter Frequently Asked Questions

The mission of the Arthritis Foundation is to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.

Q: What is arthritis?

A: Arthritis is one of the most prevalent chronic health problems and the nation's leading cause of disability. Arthritis causes pain, stiffness and sometimes swelling in or around joints. This can limit everyday activities such as walking, dressing and bathing.

There are more than 100 different types of arthritis. The cause of most types is unknown. Some types of arthritis include: osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, ankylosing spondylitis, juvenile arthritis, lupus, scleroderma and fibromyalgia.

Q: Who gets arthritis?

A: Arthritis affects nearly one in three adults. That's 46 million people nationwide – including 300,000 children. Baby boomers are now at prime risk. More than half those affected are under age 65. Women are nearly twice as likely to have arthritis than men.

Q: What should I do if I think I have arthritis?

A: Pay attention to symptoms, see your doctor and get an accurate diagnosis. If you have pain, stiffness or swelling in or around a joint for more than two weeks, it's time to see your doctor. The earlier an accurate diagnosis is made and treatment started, the better. Early treatment can often mean less joint damage and less pain. Your doctor may recommend a combination of treatments that may include medication, weight management and exercise and use of heat or cold.

Q: Do you have names of doctors in my city who treat arthritis?

A: The Arthritis Foundation, Indiana Chapter keeps a referral list of qualified physicians in the state of Indiana who can treat arthritis.

Q: What are the most common treatments for arthritis?

A: In the past two years, the FDA has approved several drugs for rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and other arthritis-related diseases. If your current medication isn't working as well as you'd like – or if it's causing unacceptable side effects – ask your doctor about these new treatment options.

But remember, it can take weeks – even months – for the full benefits of a medication to become apparent and some side effects ease over time. Stopping a medication abruptly may not only cause you to miss out on its benefits – in some cases it can be downright dangerous.

Q: Should people with arthritis exercise?

A: Yes! Exercise helps lessen pain, increases range of motion and reduces fatigue. Exercise also reduces joint pain and stiffness, builds strong muscle and increases flexibility and endurance.

An exercise program can include anything from walking around the block, taking a yoga class or playing a round of golf. The Arthritis Foundation also offers water exercise, tai chi and other classes. Whatever exercise program you decide on you should always consult with your doctor before starting out.

Q: Where can I find arthritis support groups?

A: Contact the Arthritis Foundation, Indiana Chapter or use the online message boards on www.arthritis.org to exchange messages with other people who share your interests.

Q: What does the Arthritis Foundation do with the money I donate?

A: Your support helps us fund research across the country into the causes and treatments of arthritis. It also allows us to create and deliver educational, exercise and emotional support programs, produce free brochures and advocate for new local, state and national policies that will increase funding for arthritis research. Your support makes all of this -- and much more -- possible.