



## Arthritis

Most of us have heard of arthritis, however, did you know there are about 140 different types of arthritis? The most common are Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis and Gout.

The causes of the different types of arthritis vary, however, the thing they have in common is there is an inflammatory response in the joints causing swelling, pain, stiffness and joint damage. Arthritis can affect all age groups with the elderly being most affected, generally with Osteoarthritis.

### Osteoarthritis



Osteoarthritis is caused by 'wear and tear' on the joints cartilage. Cartilage is on the end of our bones protecting our bones from damage, it act like a cushion. Over time the cartilage breaks down and may completely go. Injuries to joints often accelerate the breakdown of joint cartilage. It generally affects the feet, hands, knees, hips and lower back. Most people over 65 will have some osteoarthritis.

### Rheumatoid arthritis

Rheumatoid is an autoimmune disease, which means the immune system attacks the tissues of the body - in this case the linings of the joints. It also affects other parts of the body. There may be periods where the disease is active or not active and it may burn itself out after a number of years.

It affects all age groups - in childhood rheumatoid arthritis is called juvenile arthritis.



### Gout



In Gout uric acid crystals form in and around the joints, commonly around the big toe, and may move to the knees, elbows, wrists, and fingers. It causes excruciating pain and swelling. Uric acid is a by-product of digesting a protein called purine, which the body isn't excreting. Being overweight, genetics, taking certain medications, sugary drinks, alcohol, eating too much liver, meat and seafood, and existing kidney disease may cause uric acid to stay in the body. An attack can come on suddenly. To prevent joint and kidney damage, it needs to be treated quickly.

## Treatments

The aim of treatment is generally to reduce the swelling, pain and damage to the joints.

For more information:

<https://www.arthritis.org.nz/forms-of-arthritis/>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/arthritis>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/arthritis>

If you need help to get mobile, exercise or you need dietary advice our friendly physiotherapists and dietitians can help just contact us.

**Ph:** (03) 377 5280

**Email:** admin@tpl.nz