

## *Orthopaedic Connection*

### **Wrist Arthritis Management**

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#### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

Last week I had gotten up to the point of treatment of wrist arthritis. Ready to continue? Good.

#### **What Causes Pain?**

Probably the most basic aspect of management is to understand what is causing the pain in your daily life or work. An example would be to open a door knob with your right hand. If you have right wrist arthritis this will cause pain. You could try to open the door knob with your left hand.

When you look into it with the help of your Physical or Occupational Therapist, there are lots of aids out there to help perform every day tasks with less wrist strain.

#### **What You Can Do**

- Applying heat and cold.  
Use an electric heating pad or soak the wrist in warm water for 10 – 15 minutes. Follow this immediately by applying an ice pack for the same period of time.
- Topical Pain relievers.  
Theragesic is the one I like, but there are many other creams, gels and sprays.
- Anti-inflammatory medication .  
Ibuprofen i.e. Motrin, Advil  
Naproxen i.e. Aleve, Naprosyn
- Tylenol eases pain but is not anti-inflammaory.

#### **What You Shouldn't Do**

Taking narcotic prescription pain medication like Vicodin, Norco, Percocet and countless others is a very bad idea. I never give narcotic medication for wrist arthritis pain, but there are many doctors out there who will prescribe them. I feel this is a very bad idea and I advise you not to take them even if your doctor is willing to prescribe them.

#### **What I can Do**

- Wrist support  
Sure you can go to WalMart and get a “brace”. I guess there is no harm in doing it, but you probably won't get the right one for your particular problem. There are many kinds and styles that are used from elastic sleeve to very rigid movement limiting supports. I know which one would be best for you.
- Steroid Injection  
I use this selectively. It can be effective in decreasing inflammation sometimes for months. If not given correctly the injection can damage the tendons or cartilage and make things worse. I know where to inject and use x-ray or ultrasound guidance to inject correctly.
- Exercises  
In certain situations I may want to prescribe Physical Therapy exercises that a therapist can teach you what to do correctly. Exercise can be helpful to some if done correctly.

- Surgery

I started out last week explaining how darn complicated the wrist actually is. Well, guess what? The surgery is very complicated too. There are many procedures that can be done depending on the patient's needs. Surgery is always a last resort in the wrist because all the other things can usually control the symptoms. Nevertheless surgery does have a place and can be a great benefit if nothing else helps.

### **Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website**

I sincerely hope all of our loyal readers will take advantage of an endless amount of musculoskeletal information. It is easy! Log onto [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com).

It gives access to all Website articles, Your Orthopaedic Connection and every GCH article from most recent to the first. Full text! It covers everything I do in the office and hospital.

Good Health. Good life. All the best to you.

Dr. Haverbush