

Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection

Hand Arthritis

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Although arthritis can attack any joint in the body, from an appearance standpoint it is most noticeable in our hands. There are many different kinds of arthritis. Two types primarily affect the hands.

Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) is at times called "wear and tear" arthritis. Apparently it is called this because it involves the wearing away of the cushioning material in the joint. This material covers the ends of all our bones and allows joints to move freely without friction.

Wear may result from:

- Genetic i.e. you get it from your parents or grandparents
- Past injuries
- Actual fractures into the joints.

OA occurs most often in the hand at the base of the thumb or the outer joint of the fingers.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis or RA as it is known is a disease in which the joint's synovial lining produces enzymes or chemicals that attack and destroy the joint surfaces. It occurs mostly in the wrist and middle joint of the fingers or the knuckles.

Features of RA

- First diagnosed in middle age usually
- Affects women 3 times more than men
- Not inherited like OA
- Genes can be activated by a viral infection causing RA to occur

Signs and Symptoms of both types

- Stiffness and swelling
- Pain and loss of motion
- Bony growths around outer finger joints
- Enlarged joints from tissue swelling

- Often affects both hands

How I Treat It

RA affects many joints in the body besides the hands. Treatment should generally be supervised by a rheumatologist. For OA, symptoms are best treated by Advil or similar. Ice can help. Hand physical therapists can be effective in treating arthritis by various means and sometimes make splints which can help.

Surgery

Surgery can be very helpful in certain cases. It includes:

- Removing bony masses or cysts
- Fusing deformed joints
- Replacing damaged joints

There is much that can be done for arthritic hands and wrists. Because our hands are so important to our everyday function you shouldn't put up with pain and loss of function, because help is available. Just call.

Lakeview Area News Archive and Office Website

I sincerely hope all of our readers are taking advantage of an endless amount of Orthopaedic and Musculoskeletal information.

It's very easy. Log onto the office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com. That give you access to -

All the website articles

Your Orthopaedic Connection articles

Every Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection appearing in Lakeview Area News from most recent to first. More than 150 articles, full text!

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Orthopaedic Clinic

As I hope most of you know, I am at the Lakeview Community Wellness Center every other Friday afternoon seeing patients. All of the Orthopaedic problems I treat can be evaluated there.

Clinic dates coming up are April 29 and May 6, 2011. Call 989-463-6092 for an appointment in Lakeview or at the main office in Alma.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives. I specialize in you.

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

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush