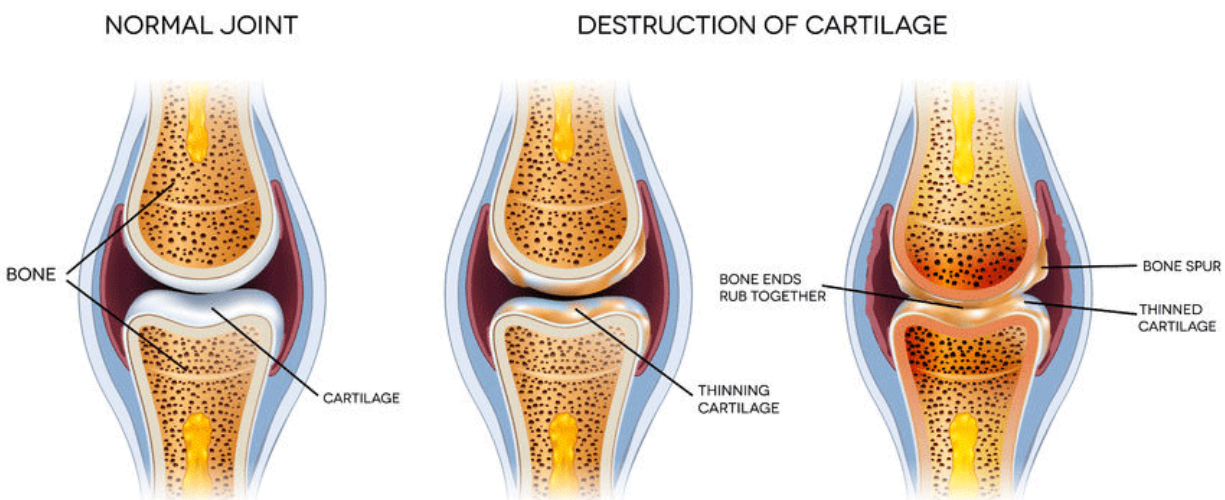


## Osteoarthritis

2016 – Dr. Chris Woollam, MD (Dip Sport Med)

Osteoarthritis is a common condition impacting both an active and ageing population, resulting in stiffness and reduced range of motion in joints. While there is no specific cure, there are effective treatments that can help get people moving again with greater flexibility and comfort.

**What is Osteoarthritis?** Osteoarthritis is a condition caused by wear or injury to hyaline cartilage which lines bone at joint spaces. It can occur due to ageing of the joint or trauma / sport wear and tear.

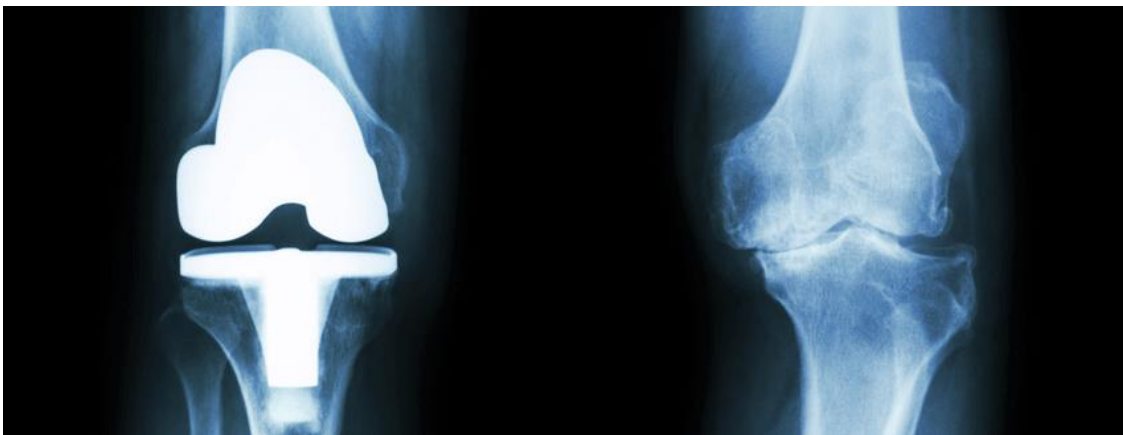


**Is Osteoarthritis a disease or is it Hereditary?** OA is not a systemic disease and is not strictly speaking hereditary. It does tend to be more common with age/ injury and may seem to run in families.

**How do I know if I have Osteoarthritis?** It is usually associated with some pain and occasionally swelling. There may be some stiffness and reduced range of motion in the joint. It is a progressive disease and may ultimately lead to 'bone on bone' contact which is generally the last stage or end stage.

**What treatments are available?** While there is no cure for osteoarthritis, there are a variety of effective management options.

1. Weight loss is often very helpful - allowing for less stress through the joints. A dietitian can help with this along with introducing foods which may reduce inflammatory markers in the body.
2. Physiotherapy is the cornerstone of management by working on strengthening around the joint, improving the range of motion, reducing pain and decreasing swelling.
3. Drugs such as anti-inflammatories are often used (frequently overused) along with acetaminophen. In the long term anti-inflammatories are not considered safe and should be replaced by recommended doses of acetaminophen. Many proprietary brands of glucosamine and other mild anti-inflammatories are available and may or may not help.
4. Joint injections have found favor over the last 15 years and, in the right hands, are a moderately effective safe form of management. These include hyaluronic acid preparations (Synvisc, Durolane, Monovisc, Orthovisc, Cingal.....and others) , platelet rich plasma (PRP) injections and stem cells. Cortisone may be used sparingly. The injections may be done with or without ultrasound/X-ray guidance depending on the joint involved
5. Joint replacement is a last resort management and is considered when all else does not help any longer. An example of a joint replacement is shown below (on the left).



**How we help.** At Physio Sport Med we can provide all levels of treatment helpful to this condition. Please consult with one of our physicians or therapists to establish what might best suit your current condition. Many treatments are covered under extended health benefits. All physician consults are covered by OHIP. We encourage you to speak with your family doctor and ask for a referral to the clinic.