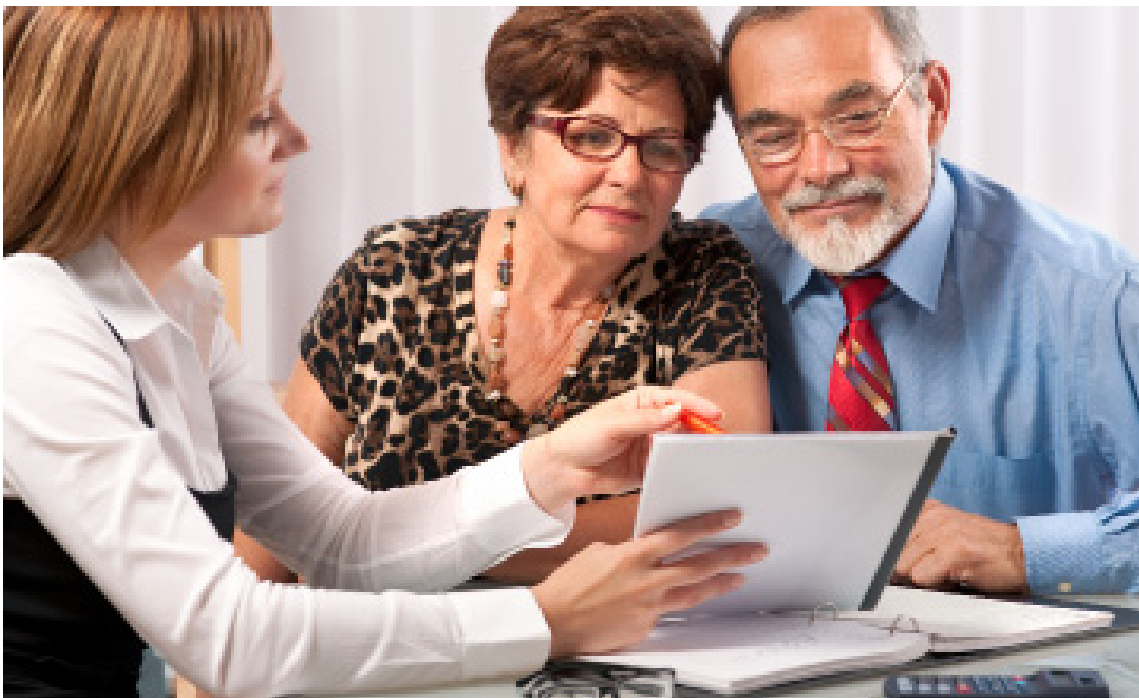


# Changing Joint Care as we age



“Early diagnosis of the joint pain is also valuable, since more specific treatment can reduce the progression such as with gout, which is easily treated with safe medications. Sometimes the extremity is malaligned, which can add additional stress to the joint and in this case bracing or surgical correction may be indicated.

“Inflammation is the enemy of the joint and if left untreated, will hasten cartilage and joint tissue destruction, and needs to be controlled.”

He adds: “Arthroscopic joint surgery, especially in the knee, has been mostly proven to be ineffective in most cases and should be avoided. Joint replacement for many joints is effective in the right patient, but the best results are in older patients with low physical demands and ideal body weight.”

In summarizing, Dr. Donner says, “Joint pain is common, and prevention and early diagnosis is a key component of avoiding unnecessary pain and loss of function. There are many treatment options but they should be tailored to each patient’s condition. Regenerative medicine is expanding our ability to help patients and will play a major role in the future. I have been at the forefront of using regenerative medicine as the treatment of many orthopedic and spinal problems, mostly pain, with good success,” he says.

## JOINTS IN THE FOOT

Dr. Kate Johnson, a podiatrist with A Step Ahead Foot & Ankle Center in Loveland, Fort Collins, and Cheyenne,

with degenerative conditions, which is the primary cause of disability in the U.S. I continue to treat both joint and spinal disorders primarily using non-operative techniques to reduce inflammation and stimulate natural healing, but also surgery when indicated.” Dr. Donner has dual board certification in both orthopedic and spine surgery.

He says, “Degenerative arthritis is often described as the ‘wear and tear’ form of joint pain, often accompanied by stiffness, swelling and inflammation. It typically affects the knees, hips and hands, but no joint is truly spared. This form of arthritis is actually more complex than a wearing out from overuse, injuries or age since many people are able to be very active and compete in very grueling high-impact sports into later age. Clearly, this condition is multi-factorial, and has

a significant genetic component, but one of the primary issues is the fact that all cartilage is avascular- that is, with no direct blood supply - and therefore more susceptible to injury and less able to repair itself. There are many natural chemical compounds in the body and joint, referred to as cytokines, which regulate health, but an imbalance can lead to joint destruction and preclude repair.

“Prevention is somewhat limited due to the genetic component, but avoiding extreme stress to your joints is advisable. This can be in the form of avoiding high-impact sports and activities especially if you have a family history of arthritis or a lot of joint pain after activity. Wear shock absorbing foot wear, and keep a normal healthy body weight through a balanced, low-inflammatory diet along with low-impact exercises.

By Judy Finman,  
55 and Better

Throughout our body, where two or more bones come together, we have a joint connecting them. There are hundreds of joints in the human body.

Arthritis may cause inflammation and pain in one or more joints. Osteoarthritis (OA), the most common form of arthritis, is also known as degenerative joint disease. OA is caused by damage or breakdown of joint cartilage between bones. OA affects over 30 million U.S. adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Dr. Jeff Donner of the Colorado Spine Institute in Loveland has practiced in Northern Colorado for over 25 years. “I have treated thousands of patients from around the country primarily

says, "The joints in the foot that cause the majority of problems tend to be the great toe joint and the joints across the arch of the foot. These joints both bear a tremendous amount of stress and strain throughout our lifetimes, and this causes the wear and tear that leads to arthritis. Some of these conditions can have a strong genetic component, but can certainly be exacerbated by additional stress on the foot, such as poorly supportive shoes, like high heels, and traumatic injuries, such as a fracture to the bones in the foot or a sprain of the ligaments that support the foot."

To take care of your feet, Dr. Johnson says, "I recommend wearing a good pair of well made shoes that fit your specific foot type properly. Also, make sure that you replace the shoes approximately every four-to-six months, since the materials in today's shoes generally

wear out more quickly, and worn-out shoes need to be replaced or you may sustain an injury. Many would also benefit greatly from additional arch support in the shoes in the way of an orthotic."

She advises people to "Keep active for as long as you can. The principle of 'use it or lose it' definitely applies to the health of our bodies. I rarely limit my patients' activities unless they have had surgery or a more serious injury. However, I do recommend being safe and using common sense when choosing an exercise program or active hobby."

Dr. Johnson urges, "If you are curious or worried that you might have a foot problem, please don't be shy. Go and see your local podiatrist - sooner rather than later. There are many conditions that can be successfully treated and many future problems prevented."

## FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Dr. Jeff Donner recommends the websites of the Arthritis Foundation, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Rheumatology Research Foundation:

[arthritis.org/colorado](http://arthritis.org/colorado)

[cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/arthritis](http://cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/arthritis)

[rheumresearch.org/the-foundation](http://rheumresearch.org/the-foundation)

"Additionally," he says, "we are in one of the hotbeds for stem cell research for orthopedic and joint disease, especially with the opening of the C. Wayne McIlwraith Translational Medicine Institute at CSU in the fall of 2018. We hope to coordinate our efforts in the future."

[source.colostate.edu/joint-effort-mcilwraith-earns-status-namesake-illustrious-career/](http://source.colostate.edu/joint-effort-mcilwraith-earns-status-namesake-illustrious-career/)