

ASK YOUR DOCTOR

Know Your Knees' Needs

(NAPSA)—Many adults dismiss knee pain as a symptom of aging and something to be expected as they reach their 50s and 60s. However, knee pain can be more than morning stiffness and swelling. Nearly 27 million Americans suffer from osteoarthritis (OA), the most common form of arthritis. Understanding this disease can help OA sufferers find the treatment that is right for them and enable them to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.



Dr. Donald M. Kastenbaum

Donald M. Kastenbaum, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon from Beth Israel Orthopedics in New York City, answers a few questions that may help you recognize and understand osteoarthritis of the knee.

What factors may increase my risk of developing osteoarthritis of the knee?

Most knee OA is a result of wear and tear on the knee joint, but other factors can play a role in the progression of the disease. While some kinds of OA are hereditary, it can also be a result of injury, obesity, weakening hip and knee muscles or other causes. In addition, after age 50, more women are affected by OA than men.

How is OA of the knee diagnosed?

Early diagnosis and treatment are important in controlling the progression of OA. OA is usually diagnosed by a primary care

physician; however, depending on the severity of the disease, patients may be referred to an orthopedic surgeon, rheumatologist, sports medicine physician or physiatrist. Medical history, physical exams, X-rays, blood tests and joint aspiration are all methods of diagnosis.

I heard that if I continue exercising, it will help my OA. Is that true?

Staying active is a very important aspect of combating the progression of knee OA. Low-impact activities such as biking and swimming will alleviate strain on the joint while still allowing for cardiovascular and muscular workouts and increasing the mobility and function of the joint.

Over-the-counter medications aren't working for me anymore. What are my other options?

When over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) fail to treat the symptoms of knee OA, there are still steps that can be taken before surgery. Viscosupplementation treatments like Euflexxa® can serve to lubricate the knee and support the cartilage in the joint. It is possible that by combining therapies such as Euflexxa®, weight loss and exercise, you can push back the need for surgical treatments.

For more information about osteoarthritis, you can talk to your doctor and visit www.euflexxa.com to learn more about this treatment.

Note to Editors: IMPORTANT SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

EUFLEXXA® should not be used in people who have had any previous allergic reaction to hyaluronate preparations or who have knee joint infections or skin diseases in the area of the injection site. Common adverse events reported were arthralgia (joint pain) and back pain. Temporary knee pain and swelling may occur after injection. Strict aseptic technique must be followed to avoid joint infection.