Healthy Eating for Osteoarthritis

What is Osteoarthritis (OA)?

OA is the breaking down of cartilage (cushion at the end of bones) causing pain when the joint is being used. Stiffness and swelling around the joint can also happen. OA is most common in the hand joints, spine, hips and knees.

How Can Healthy Eating Help?

- Following *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* can help you to achieve and maintain a healthy weight which will make a difference in your overall comfort level.
- Body weight puts pressure on the joints and can increase pain, stiffness and swelling.
- For every pound of body weight, the joints experience 4 to 6 times more pressure on the hips and knees.
- Healthy eating can help ensure you get enough nutrients, fibre and antioxidants in your diet, while limiting fat.
- Some nutrients can help slow the progression of OA.
- Fibre helps us stay feeling full for a longer period of time, while lowering cholesterol, and helping with bowel regularity.
- Antioxidants can help reduce inflammation.

How Can You Eat Healthy for Osteoarthritis?

- Follow *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide*, [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)
- Eat bright coloured vegetables and fruits everyday. Examples are spinach, carrots and peas.
- Drink low fat (1% or skim) milk or enriched milk alternatives. Milk gives you needed calcium and vitamin D which can decrease your risk of the osteoarthritis getting worse and prevent osteoporosis by preventing your stores from depleting or developing a deficiency.
How Can You Lower Your Fat Intake?

- Steam, bake, stir-fry, broil or barbeque foods instead of deep-frying foods.
- Limit the amount of fats you add to your food.
- When cooking, use liquid oils instead of butter, lard and hard margarine.

How Can You Increase Your Fibre?

- Choose whole grain and whole wheat breads and pasta.
- Use brown or wild rice instead of white.
- Choose a higher fibre cereal.
- Add bran cereal to yogurt.
- Eat vegetables and fruits with skins or fruits that have seeds. Examples are strawberries, raspberries, whole apples and baked potatoes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per 1 bowl (300 g) / Pour 1 bol (300 g)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>% Daily Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories / Calories</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat / Lipides</td>
<td>19 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturated / Saturés</td>
<td>4 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trans / Trans</td>
<td>0.2 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</td>
<td>35 mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium / Sodium</td>
<td>860 mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate / Glucides</td>
<td>53 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fibre / Fibres</td>
<td>4 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugars / Sucres</td>
<td>6 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protein / Protéines</td>
<td>15 g</td>
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Look for 2 g or more of fibre per serving on the food label.

What About Supplements?

- If you don’t eat dairy or enriched milk alternatives you should consider taking a calcium supplement (Talk to your doctor or a dietitian to see how much you should take).
- If you are over the age of 50 a vitamin D supplement of 800 IU may also be needed. Vitamin D can be taken on its own, with calcium or in a daily multivitamin.
- A glucosamine supplement may help slow down the development of OA, however, there is no evidence to show that it helps reduce pain or improve function.

Talk to your doctor or a dietitian to get more information about nutrition and osteoarthritis.
Healthy Eating for Rheumatoid Arthritis

What is Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)?

RA is a chronic disease that causes pain, stiffness, swelling and limitations in the motion and function of multiple joints. While RA can affect any joint, the small joints in the hands and feet are more common.

How Can Healthy Eating Help?

- Healthy eating can help you to achieve and keep a healthy body weight. This will make a difference in your overall comfort level
- Bright coloured vegetables and fruit provide needed vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Antioxidants help reduce inflammation.

How Can You Eat Healthy for RA?

- Follow Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide to meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
- Increase your fibre intake by choosing whole grain and whole wheat foods such as whole wheat bread, brown or wild rice and whole wheat pasta.
- Choose vegetables and fruits for snacks.
- Choose low fat (1% or skim) milk and enriched dairy alternatives.
- Bake, broil, stir-fry and steam your foods instead of deep-frying.
Can Omega-3 Fatty Acids Help?

- Omega-3 fatty acids can help decrease inflammation caused by RA.
- Eat fatty fish at least twice a week, such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring, Arctic Char, anchovies and trout.
- Other sources of omega 3 fatty acids are fortified foods such as eggs, milk, yogurt or bread.
- If you don’t eat fish, or are not consuming omega 3 fortified foods, you can take an omega-3 supplement.
- Avoid cod-liver oil supplements because the level of vitamin A in these supplements can become toxic. Read the label of other fish oil supplements to see if it has vitamin A.

Managing or preventing anemia as a result of RA:

Anemia is common in people with RA, it is important to consume proper amounts of and good sources of Iron

- Heme Iron – easily absorbed by the body and is found in animal sources such as ground beef, turkey, canned tuna or chicken
- Non heme iron – is not absorbed as well as heme iron and is found in fortified foods, whole grains and legumes such as beans, whole wheat bread or enriched pasta. Consuming a source of Vitamin C, such as oranges or tomatoes along with non heme iron helps the body to absorb the iron. Tea and coffee block non heme iron absorption.

What About Other Supplements?

To help reduce the symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis, the following may be considered:

- 1500 mg of calcium (from food and supplements) everyday.
- Vitamin D supplements of 800 IU a day have been shown to help people with RA.
- If you are taking Methotrexate, a folic acid supplement of 5mg once a week is recommended.

Talk to your doctor or dietitian to get more information about Rheumatoid Arthritis.