



www.arthritis.org
800-283-7800

Meet Your Arthritis Health Care Team

When you have arthritis, you may need to see a number of health care workers to help you feel better. These health care professionals make up your health care team. Together, they can advise you about medicines and exercise and can help you cope with living with arthritis.

But remember, YOU are in charge of your health. By being the leader of your health care team, you can make sure your health care team is working together to help you live a happy, healthy life.

WHO MAKES UP YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM?

Many different types of doctors may help you with your arthritis. Here are some of the ones you may get help from.

- **Family or primary-care doctors** provide general medical care for adults and children with different types of arthritis. Your family doctor is probably the first doctor you see about your

arthritis. These doctors also can help you find a special type of doctor, if necessary.

- **Rheumatologists** (roo-ma-TALL-o-jist) are doctors who are specially trained to diagnose and treat arthritis. They can keep track of your symptoms and help you find medicines that will ease your arthritis pain.
- **Orthopaedic surgeons** (orth-o-PEE-dic SER-jun) are specially trained to treat problems that affect the bones and joints. They may be consulted if your arthritis problems require surgery to fix damaged joints.
- **Ophthalmologists** (op-tha-MALL-o-jist) provide eye care and treatment.
- **Physiatrists** (fiz-EYE-a-trist) may direct your physical therapy and rehabilitation.
- **Podiatrists** (poe-DIE-a-trist) are experts in foot care. If arthritis affects your feet, a podiatrist can prescribe special supports and shoes for you.
- **Psychiatrists** (si-KIE-a-trist) help you manage emotional and mental distress related to your disease.

GET READY FOR YOUR NEXT DOCTOR APPOINTMENT

You can help your doctor and your health care team by having the answers to these questions before your appointment.

- Where do you hurt?
- When does it hurt?
- When did it begin to hurt?
- How long has it hurt?
- Have you seen any swelling?
- What daily tasks are hard to do now?
- Have you ever hurt the joint ?
- Does anyone in your family have arthritis?

Also remember to bring the names and phone numbers of the other health care workers you see in case your doctor wants to talk to them about changes in your treatment.

OTHER ARTHRITIS HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Occupational therapists can:

- Teach you how to reduce strain on your joints while doing everyday activities

- Fit you with splints and other devices to help reduce stress on your joints

Physical therapists can:

- Show you exercises to help keep your muscles strong
- Teach you ways to keep your joints from becoming stiff
- Teach you how to make your home arthritis-friendly

Pharmacists (FARM-a-sist) can:

- Fill your prescription medicine for you
- Answer questions you may have about your arthritis medicine

Social workers can:

- Help you cope with your arthritis
- Help you get financial aid to cover medical or living expenses

Remember:

- YOU are the most important member of your health care team.
- Keep phone numbers of your health care team with you and share them with your doctor.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help.

For more information: The Arthritis Foundation offers a wide variety of books, brochures and videos about different forms of arthritis, treatment and self-management techniques to help you take control of your arthritis. To order any of these products, become an Arthritis Foundation member or to subscribe to the Arthritis Foundation's award-winning consumer health magazine, *Arthritis Today*, call (800) 283-7800. Call or visit our Web site (www.arthritis.org) to find out how you can take control of your arthritis and start living better today!

This brochure has been reviewed by the AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY.



MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Arthritis Foundation is to improve lives through leadership in the prevention, control and cure of arthritis and related diseases.



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