

Nutrition and Osteoarthritis

Eat well...feel better

Eat Well

Let **Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating** be your guide. Eating plenty of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, low fat dairy products, lean meats and alternates will ensure that you get enough nutrients, fibre, and antioxidants in your diet. To find out more, view Canada's Food Guide at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide or visit the Dietitians of Canada website at www.dietitians.ca.

Key nutrients for people with osteoarthritis:

Vitamin C

- New research shows that Vitamin C can help control the symptoms of osteoarthritis
- Eat foods high in Vitamin C or take a supplement (no more than 500 mg)
- **Good food sources of Vitamin C** include: strawberries, cantaloupe, kiwi, grapefruit, oranges, tomatoes; red, yellow, orange, and green peppers

Vitamin D

- Also known as the “sunshine vitamin”, research shows that Vitamin D may slow the progression of osteoarthritis
- If you are over 50 years old, Canada's Food Guide recommends that you take a minimum of 400 IU of Vitamin D supplement daily, 600 IU if you are over 70 years old
- **Good food sources of Vitamin D** include: salmon, mackerel, sardines, milk, and fortified milk substitutes

Calcium

- Calcium maintains strong, healthy bones
- Aim for 1000 mg of calcium per day, 1200mg per day if you are over 50 years old and 1500mg per day if you have osteoporosis. Consider a supplement if you don't get enough calcium in your diet.
- **Good food sources of Calcium** include: milk, yogurt, cheese, sardines, canned salmon, and calcium-fortified beverages. If you don't eat dairy products, search the [Dial-A-Dietitian website](#) to find more calcium rich foods.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

- Omega-3 fatty acids can help control inflammation. Osteoarthritis is not typically an inflammatory arthritis but some people have swelling (inflammation) in their joints.
- Omega-3 fatty acids are also good for your heart.
- Omega-3 fatty acids work better when you lower your intake of omega-6 fatty acids by eating less fried foods, high-fat fast foods, and high-fat baked goods

- **Good food sources of Omega-3 fatty acids** include: fresh, frozen or canned fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, trout, sardines, mackerel and herring. Vegetarian sources include flax seeds, flax seed oil, canola oil, walnuts, hempseeds, and omega-3 eggs.

Drink more Water

Keeping well hydrated can help you manage your weight, improve your digestion, and generally make you feel better. Drink 8 to 12 glasses (2 to 3 liters) of low calorie fluid a day. Limit your intake of caffeine-containing beverages to 2 to 4 cups per day.

Manage your Weight

If you are **overweight**, losing weight can reduce your pain. Every extra pound puts 4 to 6 times more force on your hips and knees.

People who lose weight by **eating fewer calories** and **becoming more active** often have the best results. They are more likely to keep the weight off, feel healthier and more energetic.

Are you at a healthy weight? Find out by [calculating your Body Mass Index \(BMI\)](#). A healthy weight is a BMI between 18.5-24.9 for adults and 18.5-30 for seniors.

Take Supplements Wisely

Come to the OASIS Nutrition and Supplement education session to find out the latest about which supplements tend to work for osteoarthritis symptoms, which do not, and current supplement safety concerns. **Always check with your doctor before trying a new supplement.**

Talk to your Doctor

If you have any questions or concerns about changing your diet, talk to your family doctor or ask for a referral to a registered dietitian.

Learn More

Attend an **OASIS education session** to learn more about nutrition and managing your osteoarthritis. OASIS offers two education classes on this topic: **Weight Control** and **Nutrition & Supplements**.