



Riverview Clinic

Osteopathic Information Service

What is arthritis?

Broadly, arthritis may be divided into two types – degenerative and inflammatory. Degenerative or OSTEOARTHRITIS is the commonest form, sometimes called ‘wear and tear’ and is usually localised to a specific site such as the hips, knees or spine. Its classic features of pain, stiffness and restricted mobility may often be eased and improved with skilled osteopathic treatment.

Inflammatory arthritis such as RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS is generally a systemic disease affecting not just joints but the whole body. Like osteoarthritis it produces severe pain, stiffness and often deformity. Osteopathy may be helpful in addition to medication.

Arthritis

You don't necessarily have to live with any of these:

- Neck Pain
- Low back pain
- Hip Pain
- Early morning stiffness
- Pain
- Swelling
- Lack of mobility

Remember

- Osteopaths treat patients with arthritis every day.
- You may not have to put up with your pain.
- Osteopaths can advise on good posture.
- Osteopaths can help you with treatment and advise on self help.
- Osteopaths are highly skilled practitioners.

Why osteopathy?

Osteopathic treatment can do a great deal to reduce pain, ease swelling and improve mobility and range of joint movement.

There are many popular misconceptions about arthritis. For example: 'Degenerative change on x-rays means that nothing can be done. Pain killers or anti-inflammatories are the only answer'.

In fact, joint wear and tear is normal after the age of 35 and does not necessarily mean you will have any symptoms. The osteopath may well require x-rays, blood tests or even MRI scans to assess the extent of your condition. Treatment is not painful and often, symptom relief begins immediately.

Treatment

Treatment is aimed at improving mobility and reducing inflammation by using gentle, manual osteopathic techniques on joints, muscles and ligaments. You will be given positive advice related to your lifestyle about how you use your body.

Age is no barrier to osteopathy since each patient is considered individually and treatment is gentle. You may also be given advice about your diet, which in some people may be a factor in their arthritis. Exercises to do at home may also be prescribed to improve joint function and to reduce muscle spasm. Exercise in warm water or salt baths may also be recommended.

Osteopathy is not a cure-all and there are situations when surgery may be necessary – such as a hip replacement when you will be referred to a specialist via your GP. However, osteopathy can help with rehabilitation after surgery.

Visiting an osteopath

On your first visit, and before examination begins, the osteopath will discuss and record your medical history in detail. You will then normally be asked to remove some of your clothing so that a series of observations and biomechanical assessments can be made.

The osteopath will then apply a highly developed sense of touch to identify points of weakness or excessive strain throughout the body. Further investigations may include an x-ray or blood test. This will allow a full diagnosis of the problem and will enable the osteopath to tailor a treatment plan to your needs.

Your osteopath should make you feel at ease and tell you what is happening throughout your consultation. You should ask questions if you have any concerns. If further medical treatment is needed the osteopath may contact your doctor, with your permission.