

KNEE OSTEOARTHRITIS DEMYSTIFIED

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Knee Osteoarthritis Demystified

What is knee osteoarthritis?

One of the most common causes of chronic knee pain worldwide, knee osteoarthritis occurs when the cartilage and bones wear down due to excessive stress on the knee joints. This causes knee pain when doing activities such as walking up and down stairs or standing up from a sitting position.



According to a survey by Sanofi in 2012, 73 percent of Singapore residents above the age of 18 are at risk of developing knee osteoarthritis¹.

It is important to diagnose and treat knee osteoarthritis as early as possible to prevent or slow down any further damage to the knees and reverse deterioration, so that you will be able to continue enjoying an active life.

What are the risk factors?

There are a number of factors that could increase the risk of a person developing knee osteoarthritis, which include:

- Sedentary lifestyles . Movement and exercise are essential to strengthen our muscles and keep our joints healthy. Therefore, a lifestyle that is lacking in physical activity increases the risk of degeneration of cartilage and bones.

¹ Sanofi Knee Pain Survey 2012 cited *Half of Singaporeans Hit by Knee Problems*, The Straits Times, 15 October 2012.

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- Prolonged sitting . When we sit for long periods of time, our muscles become tight and stiff, placing stress on the knee joints when we try to stand up from the sitting position.
- Weight . Excessive body weight increases pressure and stress on your knee joints.
- Gender . It has been found that women above the age of 50² are more likely to develop knee osteoarthritis than men.
- Injuries . Trauma caused by injuries from sports may increase the risk of osteoarthritis.
- Certain occupations . Any task that places repetitive stress on the knee joints, without providing it time to heal, poses a risk of developing knee osteoarthritis.
- Age . As we get older, the regenerative-degenerative balance in our body changes and our body's speed of healing slows down.

How is knee osteoarthritis diagnosed?

Your doctor will make a diagnosis of knee osteoarthritis based on your symptoms and a physical examination, where he/ she would check for the following:

- Pain in the joints when doing simple activities that involve bending your knees such as getting up from a chair, walking up and down the stairs or playing sports.
- Inflammation or swelling in the knees, with or without pain
- Restriction in movement
- Instability of your knee
- Weakness in the muscles that support the knee

In order to determine the severity of the condition and the appropriate treatment approach, measurements for body mass index and muscle mass percentage, etc. and a questionnaire on your medical history as well as lifestyle habits would also be part of the clinical evaluation.

Using the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS), Get-Up-And-Go and 6-minute Walk tests, your doctor would be able to gauge the level of knee pain you are experiencing and observe how

² Buckwalter JA, Saltzman C, Brown T. The impact of osteoarthritis. *Clin Orthoped Rel Res* 2004;427S: S6–S15 cited Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/osteoarthritis.htm> 2013.

it is affecting your posture and gait. Patients may also be required to have an x-ray taken depending on the severity of the condition.

Can knee osteoarthritis be treated?

While knee osteoarthritis cannot be reversed, there are effective non-surgical treatments that include a combination of pain management, biomechanical intervention and physical therapy, which have been clinically proven to delay or prevent the need for surgery and help patients regain normal function and mobility.

Each patient is unique and it is important that every treatment approach is carefully tailored to meet individual needs.

About Inliven Center For Osteoarthritis Solutions

Inliven Center for Osteoarthritis Solutions is a medical clinic that specialises in the non-surgical treatment of knee osteoarthritis. Dedicated to alleviating pain and restoring proper function of the knee, it offers a comprehensive range of multi-disciplinary proven treatment solutions that combines effective pain management, physical therapy and biomechanical intervention. Inliven Center for Osteoarthritis Solutions is located at 10 Sinaran Drive, #08-14, Novena Medical Center, Singapore 307506. For more information visit www.inliven.sg or contact 6397 6118 / enquiry@inliven.sg