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All You Wanted to Know About Arthritis

Joint Aches and Pain is a part and parcel of everyone's life and I am sure all of us have had them at some point or the other, but not all of them, need to be taken seriously. How is it that can we differentiate between the so called serious and not so serious joint pains and what should we look for to decide when to visit the doctor. This article will focus on how to differentiate between the two and early recognition of disease. Common cause of arthritis is Osteoarthritis. This mainly affects elderly individuals or people who overuse their joints mostly athletes. Most common joints affected are knee, shoulder. The treatment is symptomatic, exercises, weight

reduction. It is important to distinguish this from the other form of arthritis like rheumatoid arthritis or ankylosing spondylitis which are inflammatory in nature. They gradually affect young people and can be a major cause of morbidity and pain in the young. Generally small joints of the hand, feet, wrist will be affected. These patient have significant early morning stiffness. In contrast to patient who have osteoarthritis the pain is worse on rest and gets better with movement or exercise. These arthritis have a specific treatment and if not treated can lead to deformities. So it is very important to know the difference between

osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis or Ankylosing spondylitis.

You need to look for the following features .Have you got the "S" factor

1 Stiffness : Early morning stiffness more than 30 mins

2 Swelling: Persistent swelling of one or more joints

3 Squeezing : Pain on squeezing of joint

If you have the above mentioned features, you should see a specialist (Rheumatologist) who will then decide whether you need to undergo any test to confirm the diagnosis. Once diagnosis is done specific treatment is available.



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Respiratory infections and their prevention

Exposure to rain brings with it a host of viral and bacterial infections affecting respiratory system, Gastro-intestinal tract and vector-borne illness. Getting wet during the rains trigger an allergy which can lead to cold and which when ignored trickle down to the lungs affecting our breathing and resulting into cough and expectoration. Asthma usually occurs in susceptible individuals, and viral infections (influenza) are an important factor triggering such attacks in children and elderly. If sputum colour changes to yellow

or green than that indicates a bacterial infection. Influenza is highly contagious ds., it spreads through droplets and fomites and usually infects in the surrounding 4-5 ft. Proper hand wash is the most important preventive method also using paper napkins while sneezing, runny nose and discard them in dustbins. Apart from hand wash, elderly (age >65), immuno-compromised individuals like those suffering from diabetes, chronic kidney diseases, liver cirrhosis, chronic smokers, pregnant ladies etc., can be immunized with influenza

and pneumococcal vaccines.

The best defence we can have is to avoid getting wet during rain. Seek doctor's advice once you catch upper respiratory tract infection like sneezing, running nose, throat irritation or cough. Treatment of above symptoms, can help to prevent infection of lower respiratory tract. Susceptible or known asthmatics should take inhalers to prevent any asthma attacks, also keep checking your peak flow rates using peak flow meter twice a day.