

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are my wrists stiff and sore? Approaching Arthritic Symptoms



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1. How often do patients present arthritis problems?

According to the 1990 Ontario Health Survey, musculoskeletal symptoms were the most frequent need for patients to refer to a health-care professional.

2. What do articular and para-articular mean?

Articular means within the joint itself. If the patient experiences pain with active range of motion in all the directions of movement available to the joint, then one can be reasonably sure that the problem is articular. Both active and passive range of motion are painful and/or limited.

Para-articular refers to the structures surrounding a joint, such as the tendons and muscles. Para-articular pathology usually only causes pain when the joint is moved in the direction that causes the affected muscles or tendon to contract. Passive range of motion is also normally preserved and less painful.

3. How do you know if a joint problem is degenerative or inflammatory?

Degenerative processes usually cause pain that increases with activity and gets worse as the day goes on. Morning stiffness is usually less than one hour in duration. Inflammatory processes cause pain that is maximal in the morning and tends to improve as the day goes on. Prolonged morning stiffness for more than one hour is almost invariably present.

**For an in-depth article on arthritis,
please go to page 113.**