

Ayurveda - Health notes

Joint Disorders

Joint disorders affect thousands of Irish people, many individuals over 50 years of age have joint concerns of one type or another. Reasons range from obesity to heredity. Improper use of the joints, overexertion, stress, diet and lifestyle contribute to the problem.

The Ayurvedic Perspective

Ayurveda identifies two major types of joint problems. The first type is associated with poorly nourished joints or low bone density and overall weakness in the joints. This kind of problem starts with some discomfort, a cracking sound, and if not taken care of, results in eventual immobilization of the joints. Because the bone is not getting the nourishment it needs, it starts to degenerate. The second kind is associated with a toxic overload in the joints, and is the result of too many toxins in the body. As ama (the sticky, toxic waste-product of incomplete digestion) accumulates in the joint, it first creates stiffness and heaviness. If it stays there for a long time, the joint can become swollen and painful. Damp, cold weather can aggravate this type of joint problem.

Vata-Related Joint Problem

When Vyana Vata, which is the aspect of [Vata](#) that governs the circulation and nerve impulses, is aggravated, the first type of joint problem can occur. The person's circulation, metabolism, and ability to absorb food are weakened; as a result, the bone tissue does not receive enough nourishment and eventually starts to degenerate. The imbalance in Vyana Vata and the weakened circulation, metabolism and absorption create a drying effect on Shleshaka Kapha, the subdosha of [Kapha](#) that governs lubrication of the joints. When this happens, the joints are not lubricated properly and this creates the discomfort, cracking sound, and diminished flexibility.

Foods and Lifestyle Habits to Pacify Vata

Include all six tastes (sweet, sour, salty, bitter, astringent, and pungent) in your diet. Favor the sweet, sour, and salty tastes, as these help pacify Vata dosha, and eat less of the bitter, astringent and pungent foods. Other healthy foods to include in the Vata pacifying diet are grains such as quinoa, rye and amaranth, cooked in water to which a little [Ghee](#) has been added; freshly cooked organic vegetables; split mung dhal soup; and sweet, organic, juicy fruits. It's important to eat a diet rich in calcium, including high-quality organic milk and vegetables such as spinach, kale, asparagus, and root vegetables cooked with [Vata Churna](#).

Follow a Vata-pacifying daily routine. Go to bed before ten o'clock at night, and rise before six a.m. Avoid too much stimulating activity at night, such as watching television right before bed. Eat your main meal at noon, and eat a light, nourishing dinner early in the evening. Engage in some mild exercise such as walking for half an hour a day. Practice Transcendental Meditation® on a regular basis to dissolve stress and calm your mind. All of these things together will soothe Vata dosha and prevent and correct Vata-based joint problems. A daily ayurvedic oil massage is recommended to prevent these kinds of joint problems, because it helps settle Vata dosha.

Herbs that Heal

The herbal formula for this type of joint problem has a special name in ayurveda, called santarpana, which means nurturing. Based on this nurturing theory of santarpana, Maharishi Ayurveda has developed a precise combination of nourishing herbs called Osteosoothe that provides nourishment to bones and joints and supports the bone tissue and Shleshaka Kapha.

Kapha.

Gently apply Joint Soothe Oil from Maharishi Ayurveda for comfort. The oil should be applied twice a day, before your bath in the morning and also before bed. Joint Soothe Oil pacifies Vyana Vata in all the joints.

If you are taking a calcium supplement, add the Calciocare to help your body absorb calcium from your diet and from calcium supplements. It's important to avoid caffeine and a highly acidic diet because they increase the excretion of calcium and magnesium in the urine, thus depleting the body's calcium.

This program is most effective in restoring balance to the joints when there is a small amount of malnutrition of the bone and drying of Shleshaka Kapha. If the problem is more severe than that, it is important to consult a physician.

Ama-Related Joint Problem

This second type of joint problem is really a problem of ama (digestive toxins) in the joints, and is characterized by a heavy, stiff feeling. Sometimes a bout of cold, humid weather can trigger these symptoms. That is the first stage. If nothing is done to dissolve the ama and it sits in the joints for a long time, eventually the ama converts to amavisha, an even more toxic form of ama that is more irritating and reactive in nature. Amavisha causes the joint to become inflamed, swollen, and painful. In this kind of environment, ama also mixes with the natural lubricating fluids in the joint governed by Shleshaka Kapha, forming an extremely sticky, toxic substance known as Shleshma. Shleshma restricts mobility and disturbs circulation in the joint. If the ama, amavisha and Shleshma stay in the joints unattended to for a long time, eventually the structure of the joints and the bone itself becomes damaged. Once these morphological changes happen to the joint and bone, it becomes extremely difficult to correct.

Foods and Lifestyle Habits to Reduce Ama

An ama -reducing diet is made up of warm, light, dryer foods that are easy to digest. Nourishing soups and warm, freshly cooked grains and vegetables prepared with [Kapha Churna](#) and spices to stimulate digestion are the mainstays of the ama -reducing diet. To keep your digestion working properly, avoid day sleep, and go to bed early so you can rise before 6:00 a.m. Exercise for half an hour every day, and choose a type of exercise that you enjoy. A brisk walk is ideal for most people, along with yoga asana stretches, although if you have more Kapha dosha you may need more vigorous exercise to stay in balance. You'll feel lighter and more energetic just by making these simple changes in your routine.

A very effective way to purify the joint is to drink lots of ama pachana water (water infused with ama -reducing spices). To make the water, boil two quarts of water and put it in a thermos flask. Then add two to three thin slices of fresh ginger, 1/4 tsp. cumin, 1/4 tsp. fennel, 2 black peppercorns, and 2 leaves of mint. Let it steep. Drink this water throughout the day for a very purifying effect. It also helps to eat an apple cooked with prunes and figs each morning for breakfast. You can also cook your foods with an ama pachana spice mixture. To prepare this, mix 2 parts turmeric, 6 parts cumin, one part ajowan, 2 parts fenugreek, 1 part black pepper, and 6 parts fennel. Kapha Churna is also a good spice mixture for reducing ama.

Herbs that Heal

If a person has a high amount of toxic ama building up in the joints, he or she may need to take Elim-tox or Detox Pitta to remove ama faster. Choose Detox Pitta if you have more Pitta, otherwise the Elim-tox formula. You could take two tablets morning and evening along with the Joint Sooth ablets and the Joint Sooth Oil for quickest results.

On stiff joints, gently apply Joint Sooth, an ayurvedic oil designed to lubricate the joints, eliminate impurities, and deliver vital nutrients to the joints. Joint Sooth is a highly complex formula that takes many days to prepare and contains two traditional oil formulas for strengthening the joints. One of these oil formulas, Mahanarayana Oil, a blend of sesame oil, milk, and 56 herbs, is praised in the ayurvedic texts for its effectiveness in increasing circulation around the joints. Another herbal blend included in Joint Soothe is known as

circulation around the joints. Another herbal blend included in Joint Soothe is known as Vishagarabh Oil, a sharp, heating, penetrating oil that penetrates the surface layers of the skin to target ama in the joints and liquefy the impurities. Once liquefied, ama can be internally eliminated by taking the Joint Soothe tablets. So these two products work together to effectively penetrate, dissolve, and eliminate ama and to lubricate the joints to restore their natural balance.

Again, prevention is key. It takes a great amount of effort to get rid of ama that has circulated throughout the body and settled in the joints. So once you start taking care of your joint problem by reducing ama, you should be very careful not to accumulate ama in future. Examine your tongue in the morning-it should not be coated. If you are eating right, you should not carry any post-lunch fatigue. If you feel even a little stiffness or heaviness in your joints, you should start following all of these recommendations immediately to prevent ama from accumulating. This is truly a case of an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure.