

## Non-Surgical Management of Osteoarthritis

Below are listed a number of options that can be trialled in the non-surgical management of osteoarthritis. These may prove useful in providing symptomatic relief for patients with arthritis. Treatment obviously needs to be tailored to the individual, and should generally be discussed with your family physician, especially if it involves new medications.

- **Education / Information Services:**

The Arthritis Society (9683 1622)

The Arthritis Foundation ([www.arthritisfoundation.com.au](http://www.arthritisfoundation.com.au))

- **Weight loss:** Dietitian advice and / or supervised program
- **Exercise program:** Pool classes (hydrotherapy), Gym classes, Walking
- **Modification of lifestyle:** Minimise aggravating activities eg use cart for golf
- **Muscle strengthening:** Physiotherapy, with instructions for ongoing home program
- **Panadol:** Can take up to 1g four times a day
- **Glucosamine sulphate and/or Chondroitin Sulphate:** Should be trialled for about 2 months, and continue if effective.
- **NSAIDS (anti-inflammatories):** If response to simple analgesics is inadequate. Prescribed by family doctor or specialist.
- **Creams / Gels:** Topical forms of anti-inflammatory medication are available from your chemist, and may provide some symptomatic relief.
- **Footwear:** Use supportive footwear, and try cushioned insoles (chemist, brace shops). In some cases seeing a podiatrist for orthotics or footwear modification is appropriate, after discussion with your doctor.
- **Walking aids:** For example, a walking stick (chemist or medical supply store)
- **Brace / Neoprene sleeve or Bandage:** These can be supplied by a chemist or physiotherapist, after the appropriate recommendation from your doctor.

If significant pain and disability persist despite the above measures, consultation should be sought with an Orthopaedic Surgeon to discuss the surgical options available for arthritis.