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## **Healing Arthritis- A Whole Body Approach to Health**

Arthritis, the inflammation of a joint, is a common condition that causes pain, swelling, and stiffness which can be local or in several joints. Arthritis sufferers often experience limited mobility, which makes travel and exercise difficult and puts them at risk for further injury and illness due to poor balance and strength, excess weight or brittle bones. There are many reasons why it is helpful to take a natural, whole body approach to treating arthritis, including pain relief, prevention of complications, and creating a healthier body overall. Many natural arthritis treatments exist, but finding which ones are right for you can be difficult and a dangerous game of trial and error, and it is wise to consult a Naturopathic Doctor to help guide you.

There are several types of arthritis that can affect our bodies, including arthritis due to injury, Juvenile Arthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis and Osteoarthritis, as well as arthritis due to infections or other diseases. The common ground in all of these conditions is inflammation in the body, and this inflammation may be affecting more than just the joints. While many anti-inflammatory medications effectively reduce the local pain, swelling and redness of arthritis, they do not address the root causes of the problem, and can lead to further health problems such as gastrointestinal ulcers and headaches. When taking a whole-body approach to treating arthritis, it is important to understand that the inflammatory process occurs over time in an environment that allows inflammation to thrive and discourages healing. Short or long term imbalances in any of the body's systems will play a role. For example, the digestive system plays a role in arthritis when foods are eaten that actually lead to inflammation in the body through the production of an inflammatory substance called arachidonic acid. Medications such as Tylenol act to decrease arachidonic acid, but if we are eating foods that counteract the effects of medications, we are doing our bodies and our wallets a disservice! Dairy products and red meat are common culprits, while fatty fish and avocado have shown to actually improve joint tissue in arthritis! It's important to learn about appropriate substitutes before removing food groups so as not to limit necessary nutrients. Some individuals have unknown food allergies or sensitivities that are triggering a response in the immune system that leads to the inflammation, while other causes of arthritis can be an imbalanced immune system or hormones, reactions to medications or simply wear and tear without healing.

Naturopathic Doctors offer help by providing effective, individualized treatment plans that address the imbalances leading to arthritis symptoms, and they have the knowledge to prescribe supplements that do not interact with conventional medications or create allergic reactions and side effects. Following detailed health interviews, physical examinations and laboratory tests, personalized treatments can begin that also improve overall health and prevent disease. Naturopathic Doctors are highly trained medical professionals who specialize in using effective, natural treatments that don't harm the body in any way, such as clinical nutrition, acupuncture, medicinal herbs, homeopathy and hydrotherapy treatments. For a whole body approach to treating arthritis, ask your Naturopathic Doctor.