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Treatment of Osteoarthritis with Ayurvedic

by Ravi Bhanot(more info)
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Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis, especially among older people. It is a joint disease caused by the breakdown of cartilage – the firm, rubbery tissue that cushions bones at joints. Healthy cartilage allows bones to glide over one another and absorbs energy from the shock of physical movement. In OA cartilage breaks down and wears away. As a result, the bones rub together, causing pain, swelling, and stiffness. OA may also limit the range of motion in affected joints. Symptoms tend to appear when individuals are in their 50s and 60s.

Ayurveda suggests that primarily an excess of ama (toxic waste) and lack of agni (digestive fire power) causes osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis is a type of arthritis that is associated with wear and tear. Poor digestion and a weakened colon, resulting in accumulation of undigested food and the build-up of waste matter, can cause this. Poor digestion allows toxins to accumulate in the body and problems with the colon allow the toxins to reach the joints. One way, therefore, to treat arthritis is to stimulate the digestive fire (agni) and suppress the ama.

It is vital to diagnose which type of arthritis you have as Ayurveda distinguishes three categories corresponding to vata, pitta and kapha.

Depending on a person's lifestyle, diet and emotional constitution, vata, pitta or kapha goes out of balance. Then that particular dosha slows down agni resulting in the toxic, sticky by-product of inadequate digestion known as ama.

Arthritis differs in people depending on their body types.

Signs and Symptoms of OA

Signs and symptoms of OA may include the following:
• Joint pain (often a deep, aching pain) that is worsened by movement and improved with rest (in more severe cases, a person may experience constant pain);
• Stiffness in the morning or after being inactive for more than 15 minutes;
• Joint swelling;
• Joints that are warm to the touch;
• Crunching or crackling noise when the joint moves (crepitation);
• Limited range of motion;
• Muscle weakness;
• Abnormal growth of bony knobs near joints causing deformities (such as Heberden's nodes, in which bumps appear on the outermost finger joints).

Preventive Care

The following measures may reduce the risk of developing OA, Ayurvedically:
• Protecting an injured joint from further damage;
• Exercising;
• Losing weight;
• Avoiding excessive repetitive motions;
• Correct diet;
• Using appropriate herbs;
• Hospital treatment as a last resort.