

Arthritis and general body pain



Arthritis in Africa? Yes, but why?

Arthritis and general pain and discomfort is common in Africa and it seems to be an increasing problem. But why?

Could it be that, in the past, the floors of homes and schools were earthen, but today many are concrete? Traditionally most children run around barefoot, and of course many children and even some adults still do so today. Earth is much kinder to the feet than cold concrete.

Could it also be something to do with changes in the diet?

Your ideas are welcome!

What is arthritis?

Arthritis is inflammation of one or more joints that usually causes pain and sometimes limits movement.

There are over 100 different forms of arthritis. For a clear description, see

<http://www.arthritisresearchuk.org/arthritis-information/conditions/arthritis/what-is-arthritis.aspx>.

Arthritis and diet

Sometimes arthritic pain can be alleviated by making changes to your diet.

If you have arthritis you might find that it helps to try to eat:

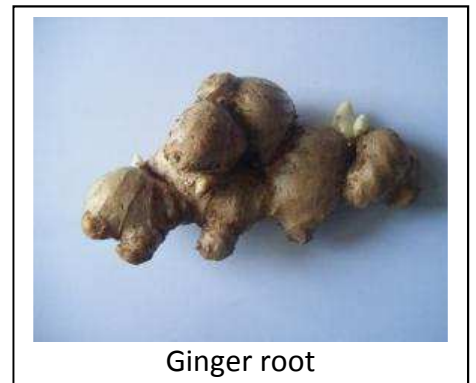
- a balanced and varied diet to get all the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other nutrients you need
- fish, beans, lentils, nuts, and plenty of fruit and vegetables
- spices such as ginger, chillies and turmeric

You should also exercise regularly if you can.

Food and drink to eat less of:

- Meat, especially red meat
- White bread
- Refined sugar, sodas and sweets
- Coffee and black tea (because they contain caffeine)

These foods are thought to make the pain and inflammation of arthritis worse.



Ginger root

Tips from herbal practitioners

Externally:

Massage one of the following ointments on the affected area three times each day. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

Chilli (*Capsicum frutescens*) ointment. Chilli stimulates the circulation of the blood to the joints and has a pain-killing action.

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*) ointment, made from comfrey roots. Comfrey contains allantoin which helps with tissue repair and pain relief.

Hot ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) compress: Put one cup of pounded or grated ginger root into a cotton cloth and tie with string. Put this bag into 10 cups of boiling water, and keep the water simmering throughout the treatment. After the water has simmered for 5 minutes, soak the middle of a towel in the hot mixture whilst holding the dry ends in each hand. Wring the towel out a little, allow to cool and apply as hot as the patient can bear on the affected area. Cover with a dry towel. After 5 minutes, repeat between 4 and 7 times.

Internally:

Green tea: “Researchers found that the compound – called epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG) – inhibited the production of several molecules in the immune system that contribute to inflammation and joint damage in people with rheumatoid arthritis”. See <http://www.med.umich.edu/opm/newspage/2007/greentea.htm>

The compound from green tea also was found to suppress the inflammatory products in the connective tissue of people with rheumatoid arthritis. Drink it regularly.

Juice of half a lemon in a glass of water before breakfast. Lemon has an alkalisng effect on the body which neutralises the uric acid that causes pain in the joints.

Moringa: Add moringa leaf powder to your food, one teaspoon three times each day. Or take moringa seeds. Many people have said that with moringa their general health has improved dramatically.

Chillies. Chillies contain capsaicin that stimulates the release of endorphins, which are the body’s natural painkillers. They can be added to many dishes.

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) A study in India indicated that if a lot of ginger is included in the diet (in food or as tea) relief is given from pain and swelling.

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) has anti-inflammatory properties and can be incorporated into the diet.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) Drink one cup of rosemary tea each day to help improve blood supply and thus reduce pain.

Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) Take either as tea (an infusion of the leaves) or cook lightly as a vegetable. Nettles contain iron, vitamin C and the mineral boron, which is thought to help the bones remain healthy. It also helps the body to remove the uric acid that causes pain in the joints.

Cinnamon and honey: Mix half a teaspoon of cinnamon powder with a teaspoon of honey and take every morning on an empty stomach for 7 days. If preferred, take with in a little warm (but not hot) water. Both honey and cinnamon have antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties.

Cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*): Anti-inflammatory, Include this spice in the diet. Biting on a clove can also relieve toothache.



Case study

A Discover member took early retirement from the Kenyan army on account of arthritis in 2006. When I visited him in 2014 he was completely fit. How has he achieved this? Instead of army rations, he eats and drinks:

- a lot of fruit (bananas, pawpaw, mangoes, passion fruits, avocado and more,
- uji (homemade porridge made mainly from millet and finger millet),
- vegetables, including green leafy vegetables such as amaranth or sweet potato leaves, arrowroot, sweet potato, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, and carbohydrates, mainly rice and ugali (made from unrefined maize),
- very little sugar and very little (white) bread,
- water, milk (almost straight from the cow) and Kenya tea, which contains ginger,
- no coffee, sodas or alcohol.

Note: Even with natural treatments there are sometimes unpleasant side effects. If this occurs simply stop that treatment and try another!

Disclaimer: Discover has compiled this information with the best possible interests of its readership at heart. Discover cannot be held responsible for any negative consequence of following the procedures described in this paper.