



Osteoarthritis of the Knee Care

What is Osteoarthritis of the Knee?

●Osteoarthritis is a progressive degeneration and thinning of the cartilage in the knee joint, leading to bone spur formation, an uneven joint surface, and pressure from the bone ends during movement, causing pain, chronic stiffness, and deformity.

Why does Osteoarthritis of the Knee occur?

- Age-related degeneration, previous joint injury.
- Overweight or long-term overuse.
- Immune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis.
- Metabolic diseases, such as gout.

What are the symptoms of Osteoarthritis of the Knee?

- Early symptoms: Joint pain and stiffness, knee pain when squatting, discomfort when going up and down stairs, sometimes slightly relieved by mild exercise.
- Late-stage symptoms: Increased pain, pain or soreness that cannot be relieved by rest or sleep at night, joint stiffness, limping, weakness, inability to walk, muscle spasms, and limited joint movement.

What are the treatment options for Osteoarthritis of the Knee?

- When joint inflammation occurs, rest appropriately to avoid continuous weight-bearing. Rehabilitation, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), or intra-articular injections may be given as needed.

If pain persists and the joint is severely degenerated and deformed, and conservative treatment fails to relieve symptoms, surgery should be considered.

- When arthritis (degeneration) is severe and deformed, or when general treatment is ineffective, surgery may be necessary to replace the knee joint with an artificial one, achieving joint reconstruction and reducing pain.
- Apply ice to the surgical site as directed by your doctor, for 15-20 minutes each time, with an interval of at least 30 minutes between applications, to reduce swelling and pain, and keep the wound dry.

- If the wound is painful, use analgesics as directed by your doctor.
- After surgery, if the patient feels unwell, they can get out of bed and move around with the assistance of a nurse and family member, but special attention should be paid to safety.
- Change dressings as directed by your doctor after surgery. Generally, surgical sutures need to be removed. Disinfect the wound daily with iodine solution and cover it with gauze to keep it dry.

Do not remove the sutures arbitrarily.

- Post-surgery, a drainage tube will be left in the knee wound. Do not pull on it. The tube will be removed approximately 3 days after the bleeding subsides and the doctor assesses the situation.
- Rehabilitation exercises: Rehabilitation exercises can begin the day after surgery. The content is detailed in the rehabilitation department's educational leaflet, aiming to promote the recovery of the knee joint to normal function after surgery.

What are the consequences of not treating osteoarthritis of the knee?

Pain, joint stiffness, limited joint movement, frequent clicking or popping sounds during joint movement, joint deformity, and joint inflammation and swelling.

What precautions should be taken when suffering from osteoarthritis of the knee?

- Adequate rest: You can use a cane for movement, but avoid excessive rest or inactivity, as this will worsen joint stiffness.
- Weight loss: Reduce the burden on the lower limb joints.
- Appropriate exercise: Swimming, for example, helps maintain joint flexibility.
- Medication: Take painkillers as directed by your doctor during acute flare-ups.
- Rehabilitation treatment: Cold therapy, heat therapy, hydrotherapy.

When should I return to the doctor immediately?

- If you experience increased pain in the affected area, abnormal redness, swelling, heat, pain, or even cloudy discharge (pus) from the wound, high fever (temperature $> 38^{\circ}\text{C}$), or abnormal numbness or weakness in the affected limb, please return to the hospital immediately.

Wishing you good health, peace, and good fortune.

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