



Osteoarthritis of the Hand



Overview

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It develops over time, often because of the wear and tear of daily activities.

Causes

Osteoarthritis is linked to a loss of cartilage. This is the tough, protective tissue that lines the ends of your bones. It helps your joints glide smoothly. But over time, your cartilage can weaken and wear away. Your joints become irritated and inflamed. Eventually, your bones begin to rub directly against each other.

Symptoms

In your hands, osteoarthritis can cause your joints to become swollen, stiff and painful. This can make it hard for you to do things like fasten buttons and tie your shoes. You may have swollen bumps called "cysts" that form in the joints nearest your fingernails.

Treatment

Osteoarthritis is treated with medications to help control your inflammation and relieve your pain. Wearing a splint may also help keep your joints from hurting. If these don't help, you may benefit from surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.