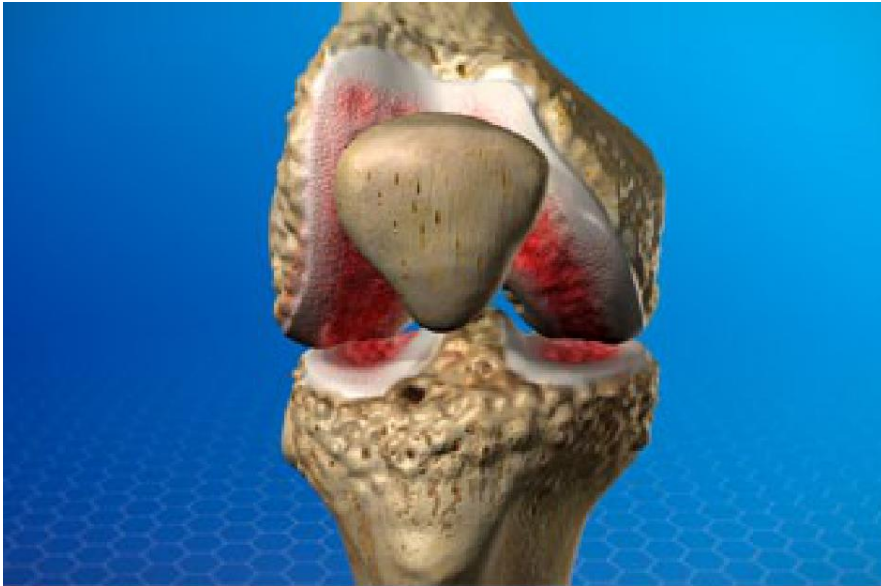




Osteoarthritis (OA)



Overview

This is the most common form of arthritis. It can make your joints feel stiff and painful. It's a common condition that affects men and women. It most often affects older people.

Causes

Osteoarthritis is caused by a breakdown of cartilage. That's a tough, smooth tissue that lines the ends of your bones. It helps them glide against each other smoothly. When it breaks down, your bones can rub directly against each other. Osteoarthritis is a degenerative condition. That means it develops slowly over time.

Risk Factors

It often results from the wear and tear of everyday life. But your risk is higher if you have a job that puts a lot of stress on certain joints. Your risk is higher if you play sports, or if you've ever injured a joint. It's also higher if you are overweight, or if you have a family history of osteoarthritis.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include pain and stiffness in your affected joints. You may notice this more when you wake up, after you exercise, or when you stress your joints. You may feel grating or rubbing sensations when you move. These symptoms may get worse over time.

Treatment

Treatment options may include medications and splints or braces to support your joints. Physical therapy may help. You may benefit from losing weight. It may help to avoid activities that stress your painful joints. If your osteoarthritis is severe, you may benefit from surgery. Your healthcare provider can create a plan that's right for you.