High Blood Pressure

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Osteoarthritis and High Blood Pressure

Several years ago experts at a British arthritis organization claimed that osteoarthritis was related to high blood pressure, hypertension. In evaluating current research, it appears that the relationship between the two conditions appears to be due to both direct and indirect relationships between the two conditions. Neither osteoarthritis nor hypertension directly cause each other, but there is a clear relationship.

Osteoarthritis and Weight

It is a fact that osteoarthritis is more common among overweight people than among individuals who maintain their weight within a healthy range or are thin. Obesity puts more wear and tear on the entire body.

If you are overweight, your joints are more likely to become arthritic. In order to prevent osteoarthritis and limit its impact on your joints, maintain a healthy weight. If you already have osteoarthritis, you can slow down the rate of joint damage by losing weight if you are heavy, or by maintaining your current weight if you are not overweight.

Slowing down the progression of osteoarthritis will reduce discomfort, and help your joints to remain flexible. You will also be less likely to need joint replacement surgery. In the event that surgery is necessary, you will recuperate quicker, with fewer surgical complications. If you have had joint replacement surgery in the past, you can lengthen the time that your artificial joints remain in good condition by reaching and maintaining a healthy weight. This leads to less frequent future surgeries due to the wearing out of artificial joints.

Additionally, obesity causes hypertension. Therefore if you are overweight, you have a higher chance of being diagnosed with both osteoarthritis and high blood pressure. One does not cause the other; however both are at least partially caused by excess weight.

Exercise can help. Researchers have discovered that among people who have osteoarthritis, individuals who are most sedentary have the highest likelihood of having high blood pressure.

Check with your health care provider regarding exercise recommendations. Begin an exercise program he or she has approved, and start slowly. Perform exercises that are gentle and do not jar or inflame your joints.

OA Medications

The most commonly used over-the-counter and prescription medications used to treat the inflammation and pain caused by osteoarthritis are medications classified as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs.

Most NSAIDS have side effects that may cause your blood pressure to rise. NSAIDS sometimes cause salt and fluid retention, which may cause an elevation of your blood pressure. In this case, the link between osteoarthritis and high blood pressure is related to your medications.

If you are like most people, the slight rise in blood pressure that NSAIDS may cause is likely to be harmless. However, you may be at risk for cardiovascular damage; especially if you are on medication which are used to control hypertension, or if you have high blood pressure and do not know it.

Another concern is that some of the medications which are used to treat osteoarthritis may reduce the effectiveness of medications which are used to lower blood pressure. NSAIDS may impair the health of your cardiovascular system by other ways in addition to raising your blood pressure, according to some researchers.

Next page: pain and stress caused by a rise in blood pressure levels.

OA Medications

It is important that you know what your blood pressure is, especially if you are taking medications to control your arthritis symptoms. If you are concerned about your blood pressure, and you take medications to manage your arthritis, read the product labels, check with your physician, or consult with your pharmacist regarding side effects the medications may cause.

Discuss alternatives with your health care provider if you are taking a medication known to elevate blood pressure, and be sure to monitor your blood pressure and arthritis symptoms if you're taking new medications, in order to see how they affect you.

Pain and Stress Due to a Rise in Blood Pressure Levels

A third, and common, way that osteoarthritis may elevate your blood pressure is due to a direct effect. As you know, osteoarthritis causes pain. Pain elevates your blood pressure.

Since you are living with a chronic health condition, you may also be feeling stress related to your illness. You may worry about your ability to care for yourself as you grow older, as the arthritis progresses. You may fear that you might need painful, expensive surgery in the future.

When pain and stress are present and your blood pressure rises, then the cause of an elevation in your blood pressure may be directly due to the osteoarthritis. However, unless your pain or stress is prolonged or inadequately managed, it is unlikely that osteoarthritis alone will cause you to have high blood pressure.

You may experience only a slight increase in blood pressure when your pain levels increase, or you may have a dramatic, short lived spike in hypertension which goes away once your pain is brought under control. The degree with which pain influences blood pressure is variable.

If you have osteoarthritis and you are suffering or have high blood pressure, seek help from a qualified health care provider.

Diabetes, Osteoarthritis and Hypertension

A research study conducted in Germany showed the impact of osteoarthritis and high blood pressure among people who were diagnosed with diabetes. The researchers investigated how osteoarthritis, hypertension, and other health conditions affected the quality of life among individuals who had diabetes.

They found that high blood pressure was the most commonly diagnosed condition that people who had diabetes experienced. Because hypertension by itself does not usually cause symptoms, the researchers found that it had little impact on the participants' quality of life. However, side effects from the medications used to treat high blood pressure caused the participants to have a lower quality of life than people who did not have hypertension.

The second most common condition that the patients who had diabetes experienced was osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis had very detrimental effects on the participants' quality of life as they experienced discomfort and

disability. The people in the study who had arthritis needed to seek medical attention more frequently due to their symptoms.

Many individuals had diabetes, hypertension and osteoarthritis. These individuals also reported a lower quality of life.

More studies are needed to determine if you are at a higher risk of developing osteoarthritis due to diabetes; it is not known if there is a direct link between diabetes and osteoarthritis.

The bottom line is that each of your conditions must be well managed for you to experience a desirable quality of life, fewer disease related complications, and maintain your health.