


Arthritis is the Leading Cause of Disability Among Adults in the U.S.

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Arthritis is a general term for a group of more than 100 diseases. Arthritis means “joint inflammation.”

The most common type of arthritis is osteoarthritis, which affects an estimated 31 million Americans. More than 78 million are expected to be diagnosed with arthritis by 2040! Arthritis can affect many different joints in the body, but many people experience it in the joints of their foot or ankle.

The foot contains 26 bones and more than 30 joints. When arthritis affects the foot or ankle joints, it can cause swelling, pain, loss of function, decreased ability to walk, and possibly may result in a deformity.

Common symptoms of arthritis include:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Tenderness
- Stiffness
- Redness
- Bruising
- Increased Warmth

Osteoarthritis is a condition characterized by the breakdown and eventual loss of cartilage in one or more joints. The cartilage protects and cushions the bones during movement. When it is lost or deteriorates, it can cause pain and other problems which hinder the ability to perform normal daily activities. Osteoarthritis usually happens over time with repeated stress. An injury can also lead to osteoarthritis, but not usually right away. For example, osteoarthritis can eventually occur in a foot or ankle that has been previously injured with a sprain or fracture . Sometimes osteoarthritis can occur because of problems with your foot structure such as high arches or flat feet . Some people may even develop a bone spur on the affected joint. Shoe pressure can sometimes cause a blister or callus to form over the bone spur. **There are various treatment options including:**

- **Oral medications.** Anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, can help reduce the pain and inflammation. Steroids are sometimes needed to reduce symptoms.
- **Orthotic devices.** Custom orthotic devices (shoe inserts) can help provide cushion and support.
- **Bracing.** Bracing, which restricts motion and supports the joint, can reduce pain during walking and can help prevent further deformity.
- **Immobilization.** Protecting the foot from movement by wearing a cast or removable cast-boot may be necessary to allow the inflammation to resolve.
- **Steroid injections.** In some cases, steroid injections are applied to the affected joint to deliver anti-inflammatory medication.
- **Physical therapy.** Exercises to strengthen the muscles, especially when osteoarthritis occurs in the ankle , may give the patient greater stability and may help him or her avoid injury that might worsen the condition.
- **MLS Laser Therapy.** This therapy uses concentrated light energy to stimulate the body's own healing process. It can speed up the process of relieving inflammation and pain for many conditions including arthritis. Most patients report significant pain relief after treatments.
- **Surgery.** When osteoarthritis has failed to improve with other treatments, surgery may be an option to decrease pain and improve function.

When your feet ache, all too often, this pain keeps you away from living your life like you would want. If foot or ankle pain is bothering you, contactSome content provided by The ACFAS & arthritis.org.

Dr. Kylin Kovac at Idaho Foot and Ankle Center for a proper diagnosis. Dr. Kovac can provide you with an individualized treatment and prepare a plan to help get you back to the activities you love!