

# Arthritis: Reduce the Risk and Help Repair the Damage

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Each and every day we add to the damage in the joints throughout our body by simple activities such as walking, standing, typing, sitting, driving, exercising and just literally existing. It is this daily accumulation of wear and tear that leads to the ultimate deterioration of the health of our joints and causes an inflammatory process called arthritis.

Regardless of where the inflammation is within our body, the symptoms of inflammation are well known as 'red, swollen, painful and warm'. In medical terminology 'itis' refers to inflammation and the prefix 'arth' refers to 'joints'. Therefore arthritis refers to inflammation within the joint(s). Virtually every adult has some level of an arthritic condition within the joints and as time goes on, this becomes more significant.

The key symptoms of arthritis are sore, stiff joints that result in lack of movement, soreness and pain. The joints most often afflicted include the neck, fingers, wrists, elbows, lower back, pelvis, knees, ankles and the feet. This is as a result of the diminished nourishment to the living cells in the joint areas. Our joints are comprised of cartilage that separates the bones from direct contact. When the cartilage is undernourished it fails to regenerate and the bones can compress, causing inflammation to the surrounding tissue.

To help maintain healthy joints, we must prevent or help reduce the inflammation by nourishing both the cartilage and surrounding tissue with nutrition and oxygen so that the cells may successfully regenerate. However as we age, our microcirculation that provides the vital nourishment can diminish. This is as a result of a weakening inner energy (chi) that drives the circulatory system, increased blood viscosity (thickness) and narrowing capillaries.

Therefore to help slow the naturally occurring advances of arthritis and to help regenerate joint cartilage, we must enhance microcirculation to the joint areas. When we do this we are effectively slowing or even reversing the biological aging of the joints. It is essential to remember that even under the best of circumstances circulation to the joint is relatively small by design to prevent the rupture of blood vessels during the motion of the joint. Thus maintaining the existing circulation at an optimized level is essential.

Some people believe taking NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatories) actually treat the cause of inflammation however, they only treat the symptoms. In fact, recent research from medical journals has actually shown the

potential for these medications to slow the healing process of the joint and actually accelerate long-term destruction. It is essential to remember that if a person does not address the cause of a health problem and just treats the symptoms, the problem will linger and often silently gain momentum.<sup>1</sup> A simple analogy would be taking a pain reliever for a splinter in a finger. Sure it may provide some temporary relief however, the better treatment would be the removal of the splinter from the finger!

The quality of life of an individual with significant arthritis can be both painful and debilitating. As a result, tens of thousands of people each year undergo the scalpel for surgical procedures ranging from arthroscopic (viewing of the joint) to full knee and hip replacements.

It is important to take steps to help maintain healthy joints as long as possible. We are all destined to have some level of joint pain and stiffness as a result of the aging process however, you can help determine how quickly or how slowly this will happen, and also how 'loud' the volume on the "pain-meter" will go. Remember you can't escape joint wear and tear that leads to arthritis but you can determine the speed in which it happens by how well you intervene through enhanced nourishment through optimal microcirculation. Proper nourishment of the living cells will help to build the joint cartilage and surrounding tissue that are destroyed daily. Family genetics may load the gun, yet diet and lifestyle pull the trigger.

## Natural Prevention and Regeneration

Since the beginning of time people have lived off nature's bounty, counting on it to yield both food and medicine. From the experience of millions of people over hundreds of years, the Asian community has thrived by utilizing specific mushrooms as both food and medicine. The separation of medicine from the concept of food is a modern creation and largely defies common sense. Indeed a person who consumes a diet that is both diverse and abundant with vegetables and herbs will be consuming medicinal substances. LingZhi, Cordyceps, Parsley, Thyme, Garlic, Ginger, Grapes and their seeds and Tumeric are all examples of medicinally proven therapeutic foods.

Today, through hundreds of independent studies, modern researchers have now demonstrated that medicinal mushrooms such as LingZhi and Cordyceps, when consumed as part of a healthy diet, are rich in potent substances that augment immune function, serve as

antioxidants, enhance microcirculation and can serve as natural anti-inflammatories.<sup>ii</sup>

When treating inflammation within the body with natural products, clinically we frequently find a decrease in inflammation throughout the body that is not just limited specifically to joints or any one part of the body. Natural therapies are routinely recommended to help alleviate inflammation both locally and globally within the body. Frequently by treating inflammation of the joints (arthritis) other areas of inflammation within the body can also be positively affected. Classic examples of other sources of inflammation include sinusitis (inflammation of the sinuses); bursitis (inflammation of the bursa), rhinitis (inflammation of the nose); colitis (inflammation of the colon) and tendonitis (inflammation of the tendon).

**LingZhi**, also known as *Ganoderma lucidum*, has been shown to lessen inflammation within the body and has direct application to help alleviate symptoms arising from inflamed joints while protecting the joints from free radical damage that further destroy joint tissue. LingZhi strengthens chi and also enhances the delivery of essential vital nutrients and oxygen to the joints to facilitate healing. Many patients use LingZhi as a companion product to either glucosamine sulfate or MSM due to the ability of LingZhi to help deliver these nutrients at the joint through enhanced microcirculation.

**Cordyceps** is native to China and possesses the ability to quench free radicals and protect joint tissue by lessening inflammation. It also possesses the ability to help modulate stress and allow the body to better cope with the physical and mental challenges that accompany daily stress and moments of additional detrimental stress.<sup>iii</sup> Cordyceps serves to nourish the adrenal glands within the body that serve a pivotal role when it comes to helping to quench inflammation associated with arthritis and other inflammatory processes.<sup>iv</sup>

**Grape Seed Extract and Vitamin C** blended together is another powerful tool in protecting the body against the onslaught of free radicals and stressors that accelerate the wear and tear on the body tissues.

Research studies have demonstrated that grape seed extract can serve as a powerful tool in mitigating the effects of inflammation. A study showed that grape seed's mechanism of anti-inflammatory action are relevant to oxygen free-radical scavenging, anti-lipid peroxidation (free radical damage to fat within the body), and inhibition of the formation of inflammatory cytokines.<sup>v</sup> Cytokines being substances produced in the body that worsen inflammation. Part of the battle with arthritis is to lessen the joint destruction that can arise from inflammation, hence the

antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties provided can serve as an important adjunctive to a comprehensive program.

While grape seed extract can help the body lessen inflammation, the presence of sufficient vitamin C may also reduce the risk of cartilage loss and disease progression in people with degenerative arthritis that can further contribute and exacerbate back pain.<sup>vi</sup>

One of the ways the positive clinical outcomes has been postulated to occur is via augmenting adrenal health which can readily wax and wane with the stress of daily living.<sup>vii</sup> By doing so, naturally occurring cortisol and cortisone that serve as powerful anti-inflammatories can be more readily available to quench inflammation. If the term cortisone sounds familiar, that is because it is cortisone shots that physicians give people suffering from uncontrolled inflammation within the body. Yet it is evident that the body possesses the ability to make its own cortisol and cortisone to deal with inflammation if supported properly.

**NanoPro** products were recently developed through nanotechnology research that utilized RRE (resonant reflective energy) to enhance circulation in targeted joint areas. Nano-scale ceramic particles were found to reflect bio-waves that had the ability to vasodilate capillaries enhancing healing microcirculation capable of reducing inflammation.<sup>viii</sup>

NanoPro Joint Supporters are available for the wrist, elbow, knee, low-back and feet. NanoPro pillows are designed to provide increased microcirculation in the neck and head areas. Researchers have shown that these products actually increase blood flow to targeted areas and, therefore, can help with the delivery of oxygen, nutrients, and the remove of waste products.

## Diet and Lifestyle Helpful Health Tips

My patients with arthritis are encouraged to adopt the following health supportive program in addition to taking the above recommended herbal supplement regime and using the NanoPro products to benefit joint health.

Recommendations include avoiding the nightshade family that includes tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants and bell peppers. Clinically it appears about 50% of the population experience increased joint pain when consuming these foods. Staying well-hydrated is critical otherwise the lubricating fluids within the joints can become compromised. Also, eating foods rich in essential fatty acids found abundantly in fish and seeds naturally fuels anti-inflammatory pathways within the body.

Particularly important is to minimize the actual daily wear and tear. This can be achieved by wearing sensible shoes

that provide good support. If you have flat feet the incorporation of prescription orthotics that provide structural support should be blended with NanoPro shoe inserts to deliver enhanced foot microcirculation while decreasing abnormal wear and tear.

There are a few simple steps I encourage my patients to take to help control degenerative arthritis:

- 1.) Maintain an optimal body weight to reduce undue pressure on joints.
- 2.) Exercise to strengthen muscles that support and stabilize joints.
- 3.) Wear good shoes that offer support; the feet are the foundation for the entire body.
- 4.) Consume a healthy diet rich in omega-3 essential fatty acids and drink plenty of water.

5.) Nurture the arthritic joints with enhanced microcirculation and the anti-inflammatory properties found in LingZhi and Cordyceps medicinal mushrooms.

6.) Target increased healing microcirculation in sore joint areas with NanoPro Pillows, Joint Supporters, Socks, and Shoe Inserts.

Most people take unrestricted mobility for granted until it hurts to move and we begin to experience the debility of uncontrolled wear and tear from daily living. When it comes to individual health, trying to play catch-up after having created a deficit yields less favorable results. It is much easier and prudent to protect the good health you have, rather than to try to reclaim it.

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<sup>i</sup> Colville-Nash PR, Willoughby DA. COX-1, COX-2 and articular joint disease: a role for chondroprotective agents. *Biorheology*. 2002;39(1-2):171-9.

<sup>ii</sup> Lakshmi B, Ajith TA, Sheena N, Gunapalan N, Janardhanan KK. Antiperoxidative, anti-inflammatory, and antimutagenic activities of ethanol extract of the mycelium of *Ganoderma lucidum* occurring in South India. *Teratog Carcinog Mutagen*. 2003;Suppl 1:85-97.

<sup>iii</sup> Lei J, Chen J, Guo C. [Pharmacological study on *Cordyceps sinensis* (Berk.) Sacc. and ze-e *Cordyceps*] *Zhongguo Zhong Yao Za Zhi*. 1992 Jun;17(6):364-6, 384.

<sup>iv</sup> Lin XX, Xie QM, Shen WH, Chen Y. [Effects of fermented *Cordyceps* powder on pulmonary function in sensitized guinea pigs and airway inflammation in sensitized rats] *Zhongguo Zhong Yao Za Zhi*. 2001 Sep;26(9):622-5

<sup>v</sup> Li WG, Zhang XY, Wu YJ et al., Anti-inflammatory effect and mechanism of proanthocyanidins from grape seeds. *Acta Pharmcol Sin* 2001; (22):1117-1120.

<sup>vi</sup> McAlindon TE, Jacques P, Zhang Y, et al. Do antioxidant micronutrients protect against the development and progression of knee osteoarthritis? *Arthritis Rheum* 1996;39:648-56.

<sup>vii</sup> Koh JH, Kim KM, Kim JM, Song JC, Suh HJ. Antifatigue and antistress effect of the hot-water fraction from mycelia of *Cordyceps sinensis*. *Biol Pharm Bull*. 2003 May;26(5):691-4.

<sup>viii</sup> First Grade Laboratories of TsingHua University

<sup>vii</sup> Beijing Fine Ceramics Labs., TsingHua University & First Grade Laboratories of TsingHua University.

<sup>vii</sup> Research conducted at: The Institute of Aerospace Medical Engineering, The First Hospital of Beijing Medical University, Beijing Friendship Hospital and the People's Hospital of Beijing.

#### General References:

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Hong KJ, Dunn DM, Shen CL, Pence BC. Effects of *Ganoderma lucidum* on apoptotic and anti-inflammatory function in HT-29 human colonic carcinoma cells. *Phytother Res*. 2004 Sep;18(9):768-70.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration.  
These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent a disease.