

Arthritis Awareness

Arthritis is a painful disease experienced by as many as 40% of individuals over the age of 45. It is generally defined as inflammation of one or more joints. This inflammation causes pain and stiffness that can become very uncomfortable, and may even progress to cartilage deterioration in some disease cases. Arthritis can be further classified into osteoarthritis (non-inflammatory) and rheumatoid arthritis (inflammatory).

In most cases, non-pharmacologic therapy is recommended first before trying any type of medication. This includes exercising, use of heat packs, weight loss, and physical therapy.

Pain and inflammation may be alleviated by first trying OTC (over-the-counter) medication options. However, as arthritis progresses, physician consultation and prescription therapy may become warranted. Table 1 below summarizes arthritis OTC options available.

Table 1. Arthritis OTC Products

Drug Name	Type of Medication	OTC Product Examples	Typical Dosing Frequency
Acetaminophen	Pain reliever	Tylenol, Tylenol Extra Strength	325mg-500mg every 6-8 hours. \ Do not exceed 4,000mg of acetaminophen per day
Capsaicin	Topical counter-irritant	Capsaicin gel/ cream/ liquid, Theragen cream, Trixaicin cream	Apply a thin film to joint area 3 or 4 times times daily
Glucosamine- Chondroitin	Supplement/Pain reliever	Glucosamine-Chondroitin combination products, Nature Made Triple Flex	Glucosamine: 1500mg/day Chondroitin: 800-1200mg/day
Ibuprofen	Anti-inflammatory/ Pain reliever	Advil, Motrin	200mg-400mg every 4-6 hours
Naproxen	Anti-inflammatory/ Pain reliever	Aleve, Mediproxen	220mg-440mg every 12 hours

If you have any questions about which OTC arthritis product may be best for you, do not hesitate to ask your pharmacist. Make sure to inform your pharmacist of any other prescription or OTC medications you may be taking.