

# Arthritis Research and You

## How To Help Arthritis Researchers "Find the Cure"

Canadians living with arthritis can help advance arthritis research by volunteering to work with scientists and rheumatologists who conduct research that is relevant to the disease. The Canadian Arthritis Network ([www.arthritisnetwork.ca](http://www.arthritisnetwork.ca)) is developing a national electronic database of "highly qualified consumers" (HQC) that will be accessible to researchers to find individuals to contribute to research projects as a consultant or collaborator.

Members of the Canadian Arthritis Network's Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) are spear-heading this ambitious project. CAC members already assist Canadian researchers by sharing their experiences of living with arthritis and offering their expertise to ensure researchers are asking the right questions and investigating the right issues. The HQC Database will allow more Canadians to contribute to arthritis research taking place across the country.

"The time commitment is small, but the satisfaction I feel from participating in arthritis research is huge," explains John Coderre, a member of the Consumer Advisory Council and leader of the database project. "A small group of volunteers has been influencing the direction of arthritis research for years. This database will allow more Canadians to contribute and this will benefit our researchers tremendously."

The HQC Database has an expected launch date of late November 2009. Volunteers will not be asked to participate in clinical trials or market research. Volunteers will always have the option of declining a researcher's request for assistance.

If you would like more information about the HQC Database, please visit the Consumer page at [www.arthritisnetwork.ca](http://www.arthritisnetwork.ca) or call 416-586-4770 for a brochure.



Members of the Canadian Arthritis Network's Consumer Advisory Council

## Free Arthritis Research Publication

For ten years now, the Canadian Arthritis Network has been funding arthritis research to make a difference in the lives of Canadians. With support from The Arthritis Society, the Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis, industry, academic and government partners, Canadian scientists and clinical investigators have been working to find a cure for arthritis.

*Research Excellence at the Canadian Arthritis Network* offers a glimpse of the important and varied research being funded through the organization. If you would like a free copy of this publication, available in English or French, please write to [can@arthritisnetwork.ca](mailto:can@arthritisnetwork.ca) or call 416-586-4770.



# Osteoarthritis: what you should know

**O**steoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative joint disease that affects over three million Canadian adults. It occurs when the cartilage protecting the ends of bones begins to wear away. This erosion results in pain, stiffness and swelling in the affected joints and surrounding tissues. As the disease progresses, bone-on-bone contact can become a painful and debilitating symptom.

A common myth is that OA is an inevitable part of aging. In fact, family history and damage to joints caused by a previous injury or accident are also important risk factors. Even less understood is the association between OA and body weight.

"Excess weight means more stress on the joints," notes Dr. Joanne Homik, Chair of The Arthritis Society's Medical Advisory Committee. "Physical inactivity makes matters worse by contributing to muscle weakness. Without strong muscles and balance, proper movement of the joint is compromised."

The good news is that most people with OA can lead productive lives with the proper treatment. Physical activity is a vital part of this process. "In the early stages of osteoarthritis," Dr. Homik says, "staying active is the most effective way of relieving pain. Attention to proactive strategies, such as weight loss and exercise, may even prevent the need for surgery in the future."

Although great strides have been made in the treatment and our understanding of arthritis, there is still no cure for this devastating condition. To support arthritis research or learn more about the positive impact of physical activity on arthritis, visit [www.arthritis.ca](http://www.arthritis.ca) or call 1.800.321.1433.



## Do you have joint pain?

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common type of arthritis and usually progresses slowly over a period of months to years. Speak to your health-care provider if you are experiencing any of these symptoms for more than six weeks:

- A gradual onset of pain in joints typically affected by OA: the end and middle joints of the fingers, the base of the thumb or big toe, hips, knees or back.
- Morning stiffness in the affected joints.
- Sharp pain in the affected joints throughout the day and when sleeping.
- Swelling on and around the affected joints.
- Loss of strength and flexibility on and around the affected areas.
- A "creaking" sound in the affected joints when moved or flexed.



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*The Canadian Arthritis Network and The Arthritis Society share a common vision of a world without arthritis. They have been working together towards this goal since The Arthritis Society helped establish The Canadian Arthritis Network in 1998. Experienced and new researchers funded through the two partnering organizations are working hard to find treatments and a cure for arthritis.*

