



## What is Arthritis?

Imagine living with pain so intense that you can barely get out of bed in the morning. What if buttoning your shirt or walking to your front door hurts so much that these daily tasks are almost impossible? With one out of six Canadian adults diagnosed, you probably know someone living with arthritis and battling this type of pain on a regular basis.

Arthritis is vastly misunderstood. Many perceive it as an “older person’s disease.” The fact is that 60% of Canadians with arthritis are under age 65. Among the top three chronic diseases in Canada, arthritis is actually a group of more than 100 different types of arthritis, including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, gout and ankylosing spondylitis. Arthritis falls into two major groups:

### **Degenerative arthritis**

This type of arthritis is caused by a breakdown of cartilage in the joints, leaving bones to rub together, resulting in pain, stiffness and eventual loss of use. Osteoarthritis is the primary form of degenerative arthritis. Some forms of osteoarthritis are the result of injury, misuse or a misaligned joint.

#### Key points:

- Progresses over time
- Affects one joint or many joints
- Can result in the need for joint replacement surgery

### **Inflammatory arthritis**

“Inflammatory” is a general term used to describe auto-immune forms of arthritis. In these cases, the body's immune system attacks healthy joints and tissues, causing inflammation and joint damage. Rheumatoid arthritis is the most common type. Others include ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis, lupus and juvenile idiopathic arthritis, plus many more.

#### Key points:

- The body's immune system attacks healthy joints and tissues
- May affect any joint and start at any age
- Usually affects several joints
- Can be severe, even contributing to early death

It’s time Canadians refuse to take “no cure” for an answer. Visit us and find out more at [www.ArthritisIsCured.org](http://www.ArthritisIsCured.org).