

JOINT DEGENERATION – SPINE & EXTREMITIES

Causes: Typically, joint degeneration can occur in most people as they age. At times, degeneration can be referred to as “wear and tear”. Degeneration of the joint surface, for example, can be accompanied by an overgrowth of bone, narrowing of the joint space and deformity of the joint. Osteoarthritis is a form of joint degeneration and may present in numerous joints of the body including the spine.

There are various factors that have been associated with joint degeneration, such as osteoarthritis, including heredity, injury, fractures and overuse. However, certain conditions can also play a role including metabolic disorders and gout. Furthermore, obesity or being overweight has been associated with a greater risk to develop osteoarthritis of the knee.

Symptoms: The presentation of signs and symptoms can vary greatly depending on the affected joint and area of the body. Generally, symptoms may include:

- Pain and discomfort
- Swelling and tenderness to touch
- Joint may be warm to touch
- Shooting pain, numbness, or weakness as bony structures press on nerves
- Prolonged joint stiffness which may follow activity
- Pain worsened by activity or when weight-bearing
- Limitation of motion
- When progressed, crepitus (e.g. creaking or cracking)

Examples: *Osteoarthritis*

How our experts can help:

Depending on the findings of the history and patient examination, the chiropractor will recommend an individualized plan of management. The treatment options may include:

- Patient education and reassurance
- Mobilization of the joint, or associated joints
- Soft tissue therapy
- Modalities including electrical stimulation, acupuncture, ultrasound etc.
- Rehabilitation and exercises
- Ergonomic and lifestyle changes
- Referral and co-management (e.g. trauma or dislocation)