

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for May 3, 2021
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about arthritis awareness and look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

I've entered that time in life when conversations with friends tend to include at least one mention of a sore shoulder, knee, back, etc. I know, I know. I've hardly seen - or felt - anything yet here in my forties. The month of May is Arthritis Awareness Month. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), arthritis is one of the most widespread health conditions in the United States. It affects over 54 million men and women.

Arthritis is a chronic disease like diabetes, hypertension, lung disease, and many others. Arthritis is a general term for conditions that affect the joints or tissues around the joint. There are more than 100 types of arthritis, but the most common form is osteoarthritis. This type occurs most frequently in the hands, hips, and knees and is sometimes referred to as "wear and tear" arthritis. The cartilage within a joint begins to break down slowly and changes get worse over time.

Signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis include pain or aching, stiffness, decreased range of motion or flexibility, and swelling. Some risk factors include joint overuse, obesity, and genetics. Joint-friendly physical activity is actually very important to improve this type of arthritis pain and quality of life. This includes brisk walking, cycling, swimming, water aerobics, light gardening, group exercise classes, and dancing. Exercises that incorporate muscle strengthening, flexibility, and balance are also important.

Another type is rheumatoid arthritis (RA), an autoimmune and inflammatory disease. This means that a person's own immune system attacks healthy cells in their body by mistake, causing inflammation in the affected parts of the body. This tissue damage can cause long-lasting or chronic pain, lack of balance, and deformity. RA can also affect other tissues throughout the body and cause problems in organs such as the lungs, heart, and eyes. RA can be effectively treated and managed with medication and self-management strategies.

One thing I find interesting is that researchers have found more adults in rural areas are affected by arthritis, with nearly 1 in 3 affected, compared to an overall average of 1 in 4 throughout the

US. Adults living in the most rural areas were more limited by their arthritis, too. Over half reported having difficulties with moving and performing daily tasks, as well as social and work limitations.

There are certainly genetic risk factors we cannot control, but there are things we can do to decrease risk of arthritis. Maintaining a healthy weight reduces the amount of stress on joints. The Arthritis Foundation suggests that every 10 pounds lost relieves 40 pounds of pressure on the knees. If your occupation involves repetitive knee bending and squatting, be sure you are following all recommendations for proper lifting.

Here are a few tips from the OSU Extension fact sheet “Managing Arthritis When Farming.”

- Organize the day by ranking the day's tasks in order of importance.
- Whenever possible, sit while working to take the weight off the joints. In the barn or shop, keep a chair, stool, or bench nearby so you can rest from time to time.
- Be strategic with labor-saving devices. Install switches and electrical outlets so they are easy to reach. Raise or lower worktables or benches to reduce the need to bend or reach.
- Using built-up handles on tools can be beneficial for individuals with decreased grip strength, hand pain, or numbness while gripping objects. This could be as simple as wrapping a washcloth around the handle and securing it with tape.

Now let’s take a look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. The ServSafe® Manager Food Safety Training series will be offered on Thursdays, July 8, 15, and 22 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with the proctored exam July 29 at 9:00 a.m. A separate ServSafe® Person-in-Charge certification training will be Monday, August 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required at coshocton.osu.edu.

The “East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series” continues next Thursday, May 4 with “Raising Livestock on 5 Acres or Less” and next Thursday with “Veterinarians: Building a Relationship & Knowing When to Call.” Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs or to find a link to recorded programs as well.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!