

Helpful remedies for hurting knees

DR MALI

Pain in the knees is particularly a serious problem faced by the older people. Sometimes it becomes so severe that it incapacitates people in bed.

Age related wear and tear of the knee—known as Osteoarthritis (OA) is mainly responsible for this. Although common, many people are not aware of the solutions that are currently available. Proper medication, physiotherapy, lifestyle modification and sometimes surgery can help stop or lessen the pain.

In Bangladesh, approximately 10 million people are suffering from Osteoarthritis. Women suffer more — 2 out of 3 women over the age of 65 have osteoarthritis. More than half of all men over the age of 65 have osteoarthritis.

With the increasing longevity of life, the problem will multiply itself within a very short time. Osteoarthritis occurs when the knee undergoes age-related wear and tear around its joint. Almost every one is affected by it to some extent, as they grow older.

Osteoarthritis can also occur in weight bearing joints mainly hips and ankles. This form of arthritis

slowly and gradually breaks down the overlying bony ends which forms the joint.

With osteoarthritis, the smooth surface of bones becomes rough and pitted. In advanced stage it may wear away completely. Without the normal gliding surface the bones, eroded bones grind against one another causing pain, swelling, restricted knee motion, crispy sound inside the joint and sometimes bowing of the knees.

In addition to age related wear and tear, athletes, labourer and highly physically active persons often stress their knee joints that lead to prolong wear and tear, which places them at increase risk of developing arthritis.

Arthritis has been linked with joint injuries and damaging events like fractures and infections that can harm the internal tissues of the joints. Individuals who experience repeated knee injuries are much more likely to develop osteoarthritis as they get older.

Lack of exercise can weaken the thigh muscles that support the knee joints, eventually making the under-used joint stiff, painful and dysfunctional. Lastly, heavy indi-



viduals are at increased risk of developing osteoarthritis, because their knees become strained by excessive weight. Research indicates that people who are overweight as young adults are likely to develop osteoarthritis of the knees as they age.

"When and how would I understand that I have osteoarthritis?" is a common question I face in my clinical practice. People start limping and the knee may become swollen with fluid. There may be a

reduction in the range of motion of the affected knee—the knee bends less than normal and may lose the ability to completely straighten out. Finally, as the condition becomes worse, the pain persists all the time and may even keep you awake at night.

Repeated knee pain is the main symptom. It tends to be worse after activity. Knee stiffness occurs after rest, the joint feels stiff and it hurts to get going after sitting for any length of time. In time, the joint

gets stiffer and you are unable to fully straighten or bend the joint. Knee swelling is also common especially after excessive activity. Knee bowing is seen if osteoarthritis is severe, your joint may become deformed what we call bowlegged.

Most people suffering from osteoarthritis can be treated by non-surgical means which include pain killer, physiotherapy, life style modification and injection in to the knees. Unfortunately if the medical measures are not successful in relieving pain, surgery may be considered. Among the surgical options, arthroscopic washout of the knees is relatively new method in Bangladesh used to relieve pain for sometimes.

When medical measures and arthroscopic washout fail; knees become progressively worsened both in pain and deformity, total knee joint replacement are the better option which is now being done in state-of-the-art hospitals under skilled care of experienced Knee Consultants.

The writer is Consultant Knee Surgeon at Apollo Knee Clinic in Apollo Hospitals Dhaka. E-mail: m.ali@apollodhaka.com



After C-section, stitches or staples?

REUTERS, New York

Women who deliver by cesarean section seem to have similar cosmetic results whether the wound is closed with stitches or staples, a new study suggests.

There are a number of ways that surgeons can close a C-section wound — using staples or different types of stitches, including ones that need to be removed and those cosmetic one made of materials that are absorbed into the body. But little has been known about whether the cosmetic results vary with the different methods.

For the new study, Italian researchers randomly assigned 180 women undergoing a C-section to have one of four methods of wound closure: staples or one of three types of sutures, including absorbable stitches and stitches that had to be removed.

After two and six months, the study found, there were no overall differences among the groups' cosmetic results — based on both an independent plastic surgeon's ratings and the women's own perceptions of their scar healing.

The findings suggest that women who have a C-section can expect to get similar aesthetic results regardless of the type of wound closure, lead researcher Dr Antonella Cromi, of the University of Insubria in Varese, Italy. That said, though, results do vary from patient to patient, and they also depend on factors other than the use of staples versus stitches.

Women with darker skin, for example, are more likely than light-skinned women to form keloids — an area of raised, sometimes itchy or painful, scar tissue. In addition, smokers and women with certain medical conditions — such as diabetes or any condition that requires use of certain kinds of steroids — can have poorer scar healing than other women, Cromi noted.

The decision over how to close a C-section incision has traditionally been the surgeon's. Staples are often favored because the method is faster than stitching, which may be better for patients, and protects the doctor from needle-stick accidents.

On the other hand, some women may prefer absorbable sutures since they do not have to be removed.

How to use an inhaler

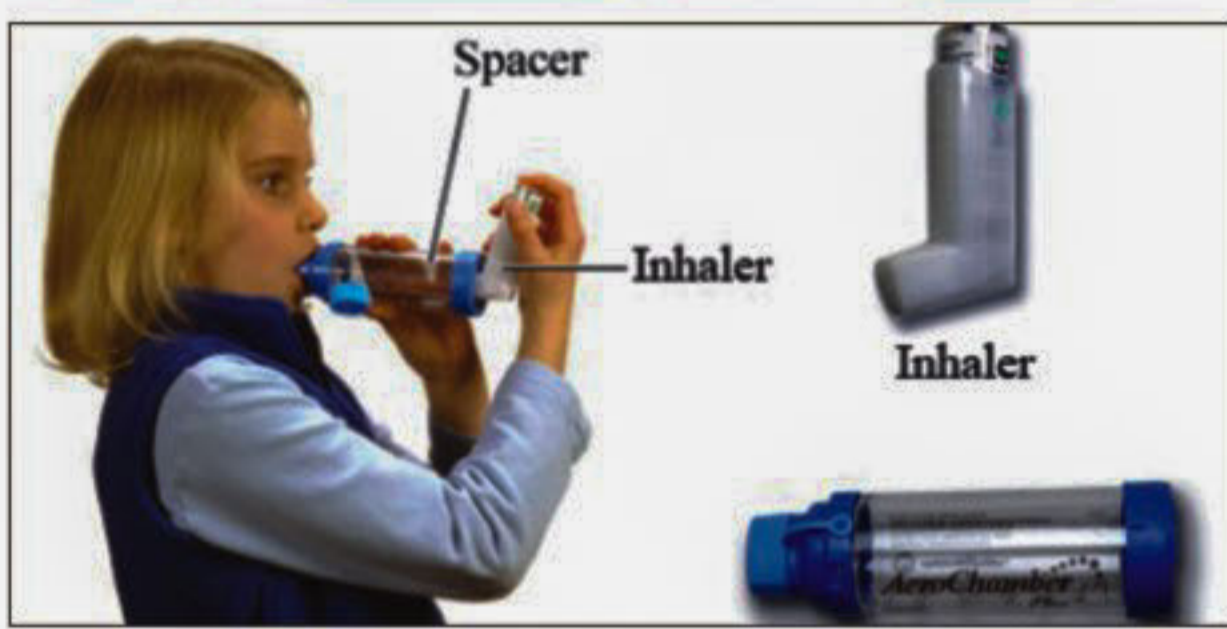
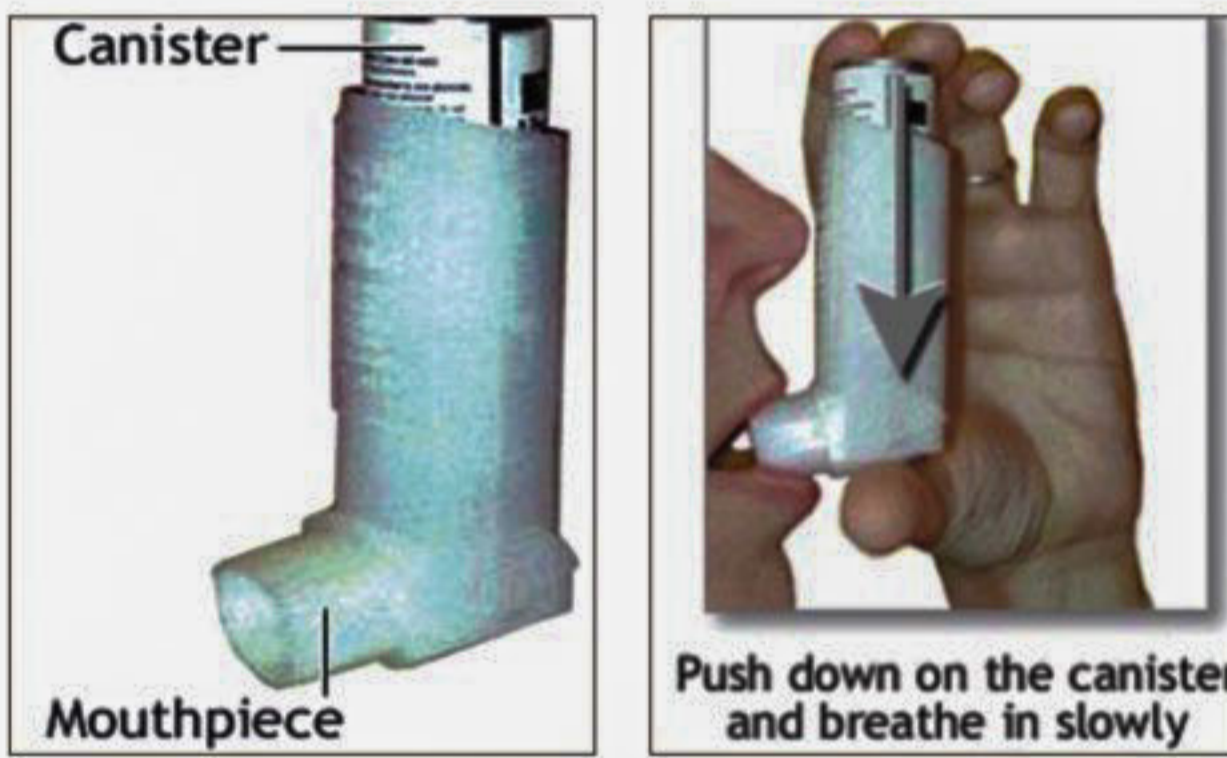
STAR HEALTH DESK

Using an inhaler correctly is an important aspect in the treatment of asthma. However, many people in Bangladesh do not know how to use an inhaler properly and do not respond well to treatment. Not using an inhaler correctly results in untreated asthma, with potentially serious complications. Here are certain steps to guide you on the proper use of an inhaler:

1. Take the cap off the mouthpiece of the inhaler. Shake the inhaler well before each spray.

2. Hold the inhaler with the mouthpiece down. Breathe out through your mouth and push as much air from your lungs as you can. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips around it.

3. Push the top of the canister all the way down while you breathe in deeply and slowly through your mouth. Right after the spray comes out, take your finger off the canister. After you have breathed in all the way,



take the inhaler out of your mouth and close your mouth.

4. Hold your breath as long as you can, up to 10 seconds, then breathe normally.

5. If the doctor has prescribed more sprays, wait 1 minute and shake the inhaler again. Repeat steps.

6. Rinse your mouth through gargling after using a steroid inhaler. Put the cap back on the mouthpiece after every time you use the inhaler, and make sure it snaps firmly into place.

7. If you cannot take inhaler properly or find it difficult, there is an easier way to take inhaler with a device called spacer. Spacer is used with an inhaler to make easier for medication to reach the lungs, and also mean less medication gets deposited in the mouth and throat, where it can lead to irritation and mild infections. To use a spacer, first put the inhaler into the one end of the spacer and insert other end into the mouth. Then repeat the same procedure as inhaler.

WORLD HYPERTENSION DAY

Healthy weight-healthy blood pressure

DR MD SHAMIM HAYDER TALUKDER and SHUSMITA HOSSAIN KHAN

Hypertension is a silent killer. Over a period of time it leads to stroke, heart attack, kidney and eye damage and other deadly consequences. Overweight and obese people have more chance to develop hypertension (HTN) and its fatal complications than other.

Maintaining a healthy weight hence is the crucial step to prevent or control hypertension. Every year, May 17 is dedicated to World Hypertension Day (WHD), which is an initiative of the World Hypertension League (WHL). The theme for this year is "Healthy Weight-Healthy Blood Pressure" intends to bring about public awareness of overweight/ obesity and its immediate effect on hypertension.

Hypertension or high blood pressure (BP) is classified as either primary (essential) or secondary. The term primary hypertension is used when no medical cause can be found and repre-

sents about 90-95 percent of cases.

Secondary hypertension is the result of another condition, such as kidney disease. Persistent hypertension is one of the risk factors for strokes, heart attacks, heart failure and arterial aneurysm and is a leading cause of chronic renal failure.

In individuals older than 50 years, hypertension is considered to be present when a person's blood pressure is consistently at least 140 mmHg systolic (upper reading) or 90 mmHg diastolic (lower reading).

Hypertension is usually asymptomatic and hence it is called silent killer. But accelerated hypertension is associated with headache, somnolence, confusion, visual disturbances, and nausea and vomiting.

The reason for which we should care for hypertension is that by the year 2025, approximately 1 in 3 adults aged over 20 years — 1.56 billion people worldwide — will have hypertension. Being overweight can lead to hypertension. A weight loss of

5 to 10 pounds can lower and help control blood pressure. Weight loss can also decrease blood cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood sugar levels which in turn lessen the incidence of stroke, heart failure, aneurysm, type 2 diabetes and certain forms of cancer and kidney failure — all of which can be fatal. So, paying attention to your weight can ultimately create better overall health.

Two good ways to monitor your weight is to regularly keep tabs on your waist circumference and Body Mass Index (BMI). Recommended healthy waist circumference for the adult male is less than 95cm (38 inches) and adult female it is less than 80cm (32 inches). Some vital ways to reduce weight as well as blood pressure include regular exercise, limiting salt in diet, limiting alcohol, eating less fat. Increasing potassium intake, quitting smoking, taking medication regularly help control blood pressure.

The writers are officials of Eminence.

Call for WHO resolution on viral hepatitis

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Approximately 500 million people worldwide are infected with hepatitis B or C virus which is 10 times the number infected with HIV/AIDS. Over 50 percent of people infected with viral hepatitis live in countries where there is no free testing and 41 percent of the global population do not have access to government funded treatment.

A recently published research from the World Hepatitis Alliance shows that

only a minority of governments currently fund hepatitis B and C awareness activities and much more needs to be done to tackle two diseases that kill one million people a year.

500 million people await the World Health Assembly's decision on hepatitis as they prepare to mark the third annual World Hepatitis Day on May 19. If adopted, the resolution would provide global endorsement of World Hepatitis Day as the primary focus for national and inter-

national awareness-raising efforts.

"Despite the huge disease burden and death toll, viral hepatitis has never before been comprehensively addressed by the global community" commented Charles Gore, President of the World Hepatitis Alliance.

Liver Foundation of Bangladesh urges government to support the adoption of an urgently needed World Health Organisation (WHO) resolution on viral hepatitis,

being debated during the 63rd World Health Assembly, in scheduled to be held from 17-21 May 2010 at Geneva.

Professor Mohammad Ali, Secretary General of Liver Foundation and member of the World Hepatitis Alliance Public Health Panel opined that much more can be done to reduce the overwhelming effects of viral hepatitis B and C. A combined approach by world governments is the most effective way to deliver viral hepatitis prevention and control programmes.



More than two thirds of the estimated 8.8 million deaths in children under five worldwide in 2008 were caused by infectious diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria, according to a study on behalf of the World Health Organisation and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The study, published in the Lancet, found that infectious diseases caused 68 percent of deaths in under fives, led by pneumonia (18 percent, 1.58 million children), diarrhoea (15 percent, 1.34 million) and malaria (8 percent, 0.73 million).

Is Your Newborn PROTECTED?

Dr. Reaz Mobarak
Assistant Professor
Bangladesh Institute of Child Health
Dhaka Shishu Hospital
DCH (DU), DTM & H (London)
MSc (Institute of Child Health, London University)
MS in Epidemiology
(Columbia University, New York)



The body's 'Immune system' of an infant helps to fight against diseases and illness. Right after birth, the immune system is immature and doesn't function properly. The infant is vulnerable to infections during this period.

What is meant by the immune system in case of babies? The concept mainly covers the ability of a baby's body to encounter the disease-causing germs it comes across and thus protects the baby from falling sick. Since a baby is born with an immature immune system, it is important that the baby is provided with a better protection system. This is why immunization is necessary to protect the child from deadly diseases. Every mother must check with the nearest immunization centre and get her baby immunized as per the schedule. But, immunization will give your child protection against certain diseases—what about developing the

baby's natural and complete defences? This is more than necessary and hence proper nutrition is required.

Water, Air, Soil-germs which cause diseases are surrounding us everywhere. How does a new born with immature immune system survive this environment? Mother



Nature has provided with the solution too! During pregnancy- a woman's body produces antibodies as it confronts with harmful bacteria (disease-causing germs) it comes across. These antibodies enter in the system of the baby in the womb via blood circulation. As a result, these act as protectors for the baby for a couple of days following birth. However, these antibodies don't work forever. After a while antibodies start decreasing and if a baby

is fed breast milk it helps in filling up this gap. That is why the saying goes: "Breast Milk is the best food for a baby, and the greatest gift from nature."

The antibodies in breast milk kill only the harmful bacteria entering the body- they don't destroy the useful bacteria (bifidobacteria) in the baby's body, especially



in the intestine. As a matter of fact, the nutrients in breast milk aids in development of bifidobacteria- this phenomenon is called the Bifidogenic Effect. The Bifidogenic nutrients those are present in breast milk

are: Optimum Protein (High quality protein at optimal quantity), Predominance of Lactose and Low Phosphate. The Bifidogenic nutrients work together to reduce the effects of harmful bacteria and thus ensures a strong and well-protected immune system. Moreover, Bifidogenic Effect reduces the chances of intestinal infection, allergy and diarrhoea.

There is no substitution for breast milk when it comes to the very first meal of a newborn. However if the mother is unable to breastfeed, proper substitutes which influence Bifidogenic Effect would be necessary. For more information on this matter, you might consult your paediatrician.

