

WEAK IN THE JOINTS

Addressing arthritis from causes to care



To put it simply, arthritis is a kind of inflammation and can happen at one or more joints of the body at the same time. The two main types of arthritis are osteoarthritis — that involves wear-and-tear damage to a joint's cartilage and rheumatoid arthritis — when the body's immune system attacks the lining of the joint capsule, a tough covering that encloses all the joint parts.

two very different conditions," she began. A joint has cartilage that causes the smoothness, and acts as the shock absorber during any movement. When there is damage, especially continual, to this cartilage, arthritis starts to set in."

She added, "However, osteoporosis occurs when the density of the bone decreases."

For women, there is a sharp decline in bone density, especially after menopause

Usually, any joint in the body can be affected by arthritis but it is most common in the knees, hips, and elbows.

According to Dr Nazmee Kabir, Evercare Hospital Dhaka, bone loss usually starts at the age of 30

(especially in women) and the onset of arthritis is more likely to begin in the early 50s. She adds that women are more prone to getting arthritis, especially during or after menopause. This specifically happens since there is a myriad of complex hormonal changes ongoing in the body during that time.

Are osteoporosis and arthritis the same?

Dr Kabir aptly highlights the key difference between these familiar medical conditions. "Osteoporosis and arthritis are actually

and this is what leads them to have osteoporosis. Interestingly, in severe cases, osteoporosis and arthritis can even take place simultaneously in a person's body but in different joints.

Myriad causes of arthritis

Obesity

Arthritis most commonly affects the lower joints and the key reason it occurs is due to being overweight or obese.

"When we walk or stand, we put most of our weight on our spine, hips, legs, and knees, and as we gain weight, our limbs are not able to support our body as much," Dr Kabir explained. This causes cartilage damage, eventually leading to stiffness or swelling of the joints.

Age and sex

The risk of having arthritis naturally increases with age and it is more common in females (mostly due to menopause, pregnancy and general deficiency in calcium intake

more than her usual body weight and it enhances the wear and tear of joint tissues.

Family history

In some cases, arthritis may emerge from a genetic disposition as well, in case the patient's immediate family (parents/siblings) had suffered.

Previous trauma

Having a history of trauma where the bone joint was hurt and did not heal in the right



way (for example, a fracture that did not heal properly), can also lead to arthritis in the adjacent joints. Additionally, there are some auto-immune diseases, which may also lead to getting secondary arthritis.

Symptoms —

Pain

Ranging between mild, moderate and severe, pain is the most common symptom that any arthritis patient is bound to experience.

Stiffness

Stiffness or locking of the joints is another general indication of arthritis. One may be unable to feel or move their joints, especially after a long period of inactivity. Sometimes, one may even wake up in the morning and find their fingers or toes feeling stiff. In severe cases, there may even be deformities of the joints.

Swelling and redness

Often, the damage in the cartilage that causes friction in the joints lead to some swelling and redness that is externally visible to the arthritis patient.

Difficulty in walking

When you are already weak in the knees, walking is not an easy task. Limping is quite normal for people suffering from arthritis in their hips or knees.



in this part of the subcontinent). During menopause, the muscles become more relaxed and weaker, and women tend to gain more weight at that time due to the various hormonal changes going on inside their body.

Pregnancy and childbirth

Even childbirth and pregnancy can lead to arthritis. During this time, a woman is bearing