

Crepitus

Dr Kabir defines crepitus as “the cracking sound or feeling in the joints” and it is very common to feel this during arthritis.

Seeking specialist help —

Dr Kabir advises to seek specialist guidance right from the first phase of pain.

“Once you consult a specialist in the initial stage, it becomes easier for the specialist to identify why the pain is happening, the type of arthritis and which stage you are in so that they can guide you properly,” she elaborated.

The treatment for each stage is different, so an early diagnosis is always helpful to find the right way to begin the treatment process.

A multidisciplinary approach is the best kind of method to start off arthritis treatment and highly recommended by Dr Kabir. In a multidisciplinary approach, while a specialist will diagnose the cause and stage of the arthritis, a physiotherapist will show the exercise routine required and simultaneously, a dietician will guide the patient regarding nutrition and diet.

Medication or physiotherapy

Medications, according to Dr Kabir, are only for symptom relief in case of arthritis. It is deemed a temporary relief for the pain, while in some cases, they work somewhat to improve the joint tissue but there is not enough evidence on this yet. For severe cases, injections, steroids, and anesthesia are also applied.

“Physiotherapy, on the other hand, can give you realistic and longer term relief from the pain and helps to make the muscle around your joints stronger,” Dr



Kabir revealed. The joint space is reduced in arthritis and physio helps to give traction to the feet and increase that cramped up space so it is much more relieving than medication. In fact, as per Dr Kabir, physio has evidently helped to significantly improve the condition of patients suffering from knee arthritis.

In very severe cases, a total knee/joint/hip replacement surgery may be required by the patient. “This kind of surgery has become more prevalent within the country in the last decade,” Dr Kabir assured. These severe case patients usually face serious difficulty in walking or even just standing up as they have hardly any joint space left, the bones are locked in together and their only ray of hope at that point is a prosthesis placement through surgery. While this surgery is usually undertaken by elderly patients and it may involve few age-related risks and complications, it is a surgery lasting 2-3 hours and post-surgery

care includes regular physiotherapy and rehabilitation for a month or two. The lifetime of the prosthesis is about 15 to 20 years and these patients usually do not face any problems in the long run and in rare cases, they might need a revision surgery.

Healing and caring —

Analgesics

Dr Kabir elucidated that the general advice to fight pain is to take analgesics like paracetamol at home.

“Anything more powerful than that would surely require specialist advice,” she mentioned.

Warm compressions

That hot water bag you stowed away in a drawer somewhere might just be your best friend when experiencing joint pains. Warm compressions really help to relieve the pain, swelling and redness.

Joint-specific exercise

Exercising on your specific joints, can help to make the muscles around your bones stronger and prevent from arthritis condition getting more aggravated.

Weight reduction

Maintaining a normal body weight (as per your own BMI) can help to keep arthritis at bay.

Active lifestyle and healthy food

According to Dr Kabir, just regularly staying active overall and having a healthy diet that is especially rich in calcium, vitamins and minerals can definitely help fight arthritis and keep it in check even if you start experiencing it.

Although the process of arthritis causes cartilage damage that is almost irreparable, the pain might tend to peak like a sinus curve, decrease gradually and become episodic, and in some cases, it might even go away completely. The most crucial part of healing from arthritis is acceptance.

Arthritis is one of the most common age-related ailments that in all honesty, it is irreversible and has no exact preventions. But what we do know is how to heal and care for ourselves when we experience it. That is why, the first step is to be alert when the first pain hits, and start with a multidisciplinary approach with regular checkups, to step into a life where we can learn to live with arthritis while having it under full control.

By Nafisa Faruque

Photo: Collected

