



MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

Musculoskeletal disorders are extremely common, affecting all age groups. They consist of a variety of different diseases and conditions that cause pain or discomfort in the bones, joints, muscles, or tendons, and they can be acute or chronic.

Approximately 33 percent of U.S. adults are affected by musculoskeletal conditions or symptoms, including limitation of motion or pain in a joint or extremity. The prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders generally increases with age, with the majority of people over age 75 having some form of musculoskeletal disorder, especially arthritis.

Musculoskeletal pain affects the muscles, ligaments and tendons, and bones, as a result of a variety of possible causes. Muscle tissue can be damaged with the wear and tear of daily activities. Trauma to an area (jerking movements, auto accidents, falls, fractures, sprains, dislocations, and direct blows to the muscle) also can cause musculoskeletal problems.

Other causes include postural strain, repetitive movements, overuse, and prolonged immobilization. Changes in posture or poor body mechanics may bring about spinal alignment problems and muscle shortening, therefore causing other muscles to be misused and become painful.

Besides arthritis, some of the most common types of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) include carpal tunnel syndrome, sprains, strains, fibromyalgia and tendonitis.

HOW ARE MSDs DIAGNOSED AND TREATED?

If you think you have musculoskeletal difficulties, you should ask your doctor to conduct a thorough physical examination and medical history, along with diagnostic studies to determine the nature of the condition.

Different types of manual therapy, or mobilization, can be used to treat people with spinal alignment problems. For some acute musculoskeletal pain, surgery is sometimes prescribed, while medications can also be used to treat inflammation or pain.

Depending on the case, other treatments may include:

- Injections with anesthetic or anti-inflammatory medications in or around the painful sites
- Exercise that includes muscle strengthening and stretching
- Physical or occupational therapy
- Chiropractic care
- Therapeutic massage

If you're considering surgery or other treatments for a musculoskeletal disorder, contact Best Doctors to be sure your treatment plan is right for you.

DID YOU KNOW?

Best Doctors is a confidential benefit offered by your employer at no cost to you

34% of Best Doctors' cases see a change in diagnosis, and 68% see a change in treatment

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