

# **Arthritis: Know the Warning Signs, Get Checked, and Get Help!**

## **Warning Signs**

If any of these symptoms lasts longer than 2 weeks, then get checked by your regular doctor or a rheumatologist (a doctor that specializes in joint problems). If you have a fever, feel physically ill, suddenly have a swollen joint, or have problems using your joint, see your doctor sooner.



- Lasting joint pain
- Joint swelling
- Joint stiffness
- Tenderness or pain when touching a joint
- Problems using or moving a joint normally
- Warmth and redness in a joint

## **Help for Most Types of Arthritis**

- Rest
- Exercise
- Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet
- Wear the right shoes
- A cane helps with pain in the feet, knees, and hips when walking
- Gadgets to help open jars and bottles, or to turn door knobs
- Medications – ask your doctor what is right for you:
  - Over-the-counter (these can have side-effects, too)
    - Acetaminophen
    - Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS)
      - Ibuprofen or Naproxen
  - Other medications



## **Healthy Eating**

- Eat vegetables, fruit, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, poultry, fish
- Eat some foods with n-3 or omega-3 healthy fats:
  - Fish, such as salmon
  - Nuts, especially walnuts
- Ask your doctor about taking omega-3 supplements (1 to 3 grams daily), glucosamine, or chondroitin sulphate. Their benefits are not yet clear.

National Institute on Aging, Age Page, Arthritis Advice, <http://www.niapublications.org/agepages/arthritis.asp>.