

The Startling Truth About Arthritis!

The Arthritis Treatment Center Story

Arthritis is a term derived from the Greek, "**arthron**" meaning joint and –"**itis**" meaning inflammation.

It refers to more than 100 different conditions.

Arthritis is...

- Known throughout the animal kingdom
- Affected even dinosaurs
- Mentioned in the works of ancient civilizations

Most types of arthritis involve joint inflammation...

- Swelling
- Heat
- Redness
- Pain

Arthritis is the...

- Leading cause of physician visits in adults over 65
- Most common chronic disease
- Most common cause of crippling
- Most common cause of impairment and functional limitation in adults

The economic cost of arthritis is staggering...

More than \$65 billion annually in medical care and lost productivity!

Most people know arthritis is common and causes disability. What they don't know is...

arthritis can cause blindness, deafness, paralysis... and even premature death!

Common misconceptions about arthritis

Myth Number One: " Arthritis can hurt but it isn't serious..."

Fact: While arthritis causes pain and crippling disability, it may also cause early death! Studies from Vanderbilt University showed rheumatoid arthritis may have a higher mortality rate than either stage IV Hodgkin's disease or initial heart attacks! Higher than even diabetes and cigarette smoking!

Myth Number Two: "Nothing can be done about arthritis..."

Fact: You don't have to put up with arthritis. Arthritis, when diagnosed and treated properly, can be controlled. Often, even the more serious types of arthritis can be put into remission.

Myth Number Three: "It's all due to getting old..."

Fact: Arthritis affects all age groups.

Fact: 3/5 people with arthritis are under the age of 65! Arthritis can even affect infants and children!

Myth Number Four: "If I wait, it'll go away..."

Fact: Arthritis can progress to the point that even the best medicines in the world won't help...

Fact: 6 million Americans, 2.5% of the population, believe they have arthritis but have never seen a physician to be sure. It's important to get a correct diagnosis and proper treatment as soon as possible.

Myth Number Five: "Arthritis medicines have too many side effects..."

Fact: Many of the medicines used to treat arthritis do have potential side effects.

43% of hospital admissions for patients with rheumatoid arthritis were due to side effects from drug therapy.

Fact: When properly monitored by a specialist, the chances of severe side effects are much, much lower.

Myth Number Six: "I'll never get arthritis..."

Fact: More than 97% of people over the age of 50 will have arthritis.

Fact: Just because you don't have symptoms now doesn't mean you won't have symptoms soon.

Myth Number Seven: "It's just a few aches and pains... Nothing I can't live with..."

Fact: Arthritis is the number one cause of loss of personal freedom.

Fact: More than 100,000 Americans can't walk independently from their bed to the bathroom because of arthritis affecting the hip or knee!

7.9 million people, 3% of the US population, have their activities limited because of arthritis.

What will you do if this disease robs you of your independence? What will you do if you have to depend on your relatives and friends for simple day to day activities?

What will you do to get your life back? To enjoy gardening... golfing... taking a stroll in the park... making that perfect cast when you go fishing... or just kicking back and relaxing without the pain and suffering of arthritis...

First of all, let me tell you what doesn't work... Patients with arthritis are bombarded by countless scams. These so-called remedies may cause harm by promising a cure thereby...

- delaying proper diagnosis and treatment
- causing severe damage to internal organs

Let's talk about a couple of other myths at this point...

Myth Number Eight: "Any doctor can treat arthritis..."

Fact: Since 1950, the amount of information a doctor has to know has increased 20 times.

It's impossible for a non-specialist to keep up with new developments in arthritis.

Fact: Only rheumatologists are specifically trained in how to give comprehensive arthritis care. While orthopedic surgeons, chiropractors, and other physicians may have some knowledge, they don't have the training that rheumatologists do. Put another way... Do you want an electrician to handle your plumbing?

Myth Number Nine: "All rheumatologists have the same level of expertise."

Fact: Expertise is earned through constant learning and training. What you should look for in a rheumatologist is the following...

- Graduate of an American medical school
- Training in both internal medicine and radiology at a major university teaching hospital
- Board certification in both internal medicine and rheumatology
- Fellowship at a research center like the National Institutes of Health
- At least 25 years of practice experience
- At least 50 publications in the medical literature
- Experience with at least 100 clinical trials involving new arthritis medicines. This shows a commitment to keeping current - on the cutting edge
- National reputation for expertise

Here's a question to ask... "Dr., did you pass a board exam in rheumatology on your first attempt?"

The rheumatology board exam is a grueling test. Only the best pass the first time!

The four key qualities you should look for in an arthritis specialist...

Open-mindedness

All patients need individualized attention.

More than 80% of patients will seek out alternative route remedies. Sometimes alternative medicines will help. A good specialist will be open to this.

That brings us to **empathy**, because your doctor needs to be on the same wavelength as you... so you'll feel comfortable and at ease... Someone you can talk with who will be interested in your goals and dreams... Not focused on his or her own agenda.

There is no substitute for **experience**. Someone who's been in practice for many years will recognize things an inexperienced clinician will miss. It's a skill. The more you work hard at it, the better you are! A good rheumatologist must be a good diagnostician because there are more than 100 different kinds of arthritis.

You want somebody who's **well known and respected** by his or her peers. You want someone who went to medical school in the United States, who did their training at a major university, and who did their arthritis training at a world-renowned research facility. You'll also want someone who is board certified in rheumatology and has published at least 50 papers in scientific journals. The best rheumatologists also serve as reviewers for the medical journals. They help evaluate what research results should be published. Dr. Wei has done all this.

Dr. Wei's goal is to provide arthritis treatments to give you back your life.

His vision was to create a world-class facility specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of arthritis and related disorders.

The Arthritis Treatment Center is one of fewer than 50 centers across United States and Canada to be elected to membership in Rheumatology Research International, a highly selective arthritis research organization.

Rheumatologists from other academic institutions including the University of Michigan, University of Maryland, Bowman-Gray University, the University of Wisconsin, Cornell University, Georgetown University, University of California, and elsewhere, have come to train at the Arthritis Treatment Center. In addition, rheumatologists from four other continents including South America, Asia, Europe, and Australia have come to observe and learn Dr. Wei's techniques.

Dr. Wei has served as a consultant for numerous pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies including CIBA Geigy, Merck, Pharmacia, Upjohn, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, Procter and Gamble, Sanofi Winthrop, Wyeth, Searle, Bayer, Smith Kline, Immunex, Chiron, Amgen, Corixa, Abgenix, Scios, Genentech, Abbott, Fujisawa, Isis, Cyprus, Roche, Medimmune, and many others.

So here's what you need to do...

The first step is to get a proper diagnosis.

A careful history and physical exam by a well-trained specialist - an arthritis expert - is invaluable.

Newer laboratory techniques allow earlier and more accurate diagnosis. A skilled rheumatology laboratory can make the difference between making a diagnosis or not. And monitoring patients for side effects is an extremely important job for the skilled rheumatology lab.

A rheumatology lab should have accreditation and a top rating by an accrediting agency such as COLA.

Most tests used to diagnose arthritis are considered high complexity level tests. Personnel must meet specific requirements to perform the tests.

Many commercial laboratories do not have the skill and expertise needed for the diagnosis and monitoring of arthritis patients. And since they are performing thousands of tests in an hour, the chance for laboratory error is increased dramatically.

Diagnostic ultrasound is a method for visualizing the musculoskeletal system using sound waves. This has been used for many purposes and is now being used in arthritis practice and research to detect early disease and to follow the effects of therapy. It may cut the time in half for getting the diagnosis!

It also allows for accurate guidance of injections and other procedures.

However, the learning curve is steep and many practitioners just don't want to invest the time and effort in order to learn this technology.

While arthroscopic surgery isn't new, the use of arthroscopy (telescope inside the joint) for arthritis is constantly being redefined. Arthroscopy has both treatment as well as research applications. It is now possible to use arthroscopy to look inside finger joints!

Dr. Wei is skilled in arthroscopy.

He has performed more than 1500 cases and has published numerous articles in the medical literature.

He is a member of the Arthroscopy Association of North America, who are among the best arthroscopists in the world.

Regenerative medicine is a new concept. Using autologous stem cells, a person's own stem cells, and autologous growth factors found in the blood, it may be possible to restore damaged cartilage and tendon tissue. Dr. Wei is an acknowledged international expert and authority in this area.

Dr. Wei is not just an arthritis specialist, he's an arthritis authority and expert.

Why the commitment?

Dr. Wei's great aunt died of complications related to rheumatoid arthritis.

His sister contracted rheumatoid arthritis at the age of 36.

One of his sons developed juvenile arthritis at the age of 10.

Conquering arthritis is his mission!

What will you experience at the Arthritis Treatment Center?

You'll notice the difference right away. When your call is answered by the front office, you'll be greeted in a warm, friendly manner. Your problems will be handled efficiently. And, you'll be seen on time. The staff will be professional. You won't have to play the waiting game.

During your visit, you'll be given free informational brochures and, often, medication samples along with detailed explanations about effects and side effects of the drugs you're taking.

While the emphasis is on conventional arthritis treatments, your rights as a human being, an individual, will be respected. The staff is open-minded about alternative therapies. You'll be encouraged to discuss other areas of your life because of our firm belief in the mind body connection.

And when you call in, your calls are returned.

Commitments are met.

Each member of the staff is selected because of their expertise plus their ability to empathize with patients. And most of all... their ability to listen to you.

All Arthritis Treatment Center staff members undergo rigorous training, retraining, and recertification.

The Arthritis Treatment Center has been among the first to develop such procedures as office-based chemotherapeutic regimens for rheumatoid arthritis, office-based epidural blocks, office-based arthroscopy, stem cell and platelet-rich plasma (PRP) procedures as well as other procedures for palliation of arthritis and related problems.

With more than 60 publications, Arthritis Treatment Center research has appeared in journals such as Annals of Internal Medicine, Arthritis and Rheumatism, Journal of Clinical Rheumatology, Rheumatology Review, Lancet, Arthritis Care and Research, Journal of the American Medical Association, Arthroscopy, and others.

Quite frankly, we're not for everyone. If your only concern is the lowest priced care available, then we suggest you might be happier elsewhere.

We don't sign contracts with insurance companies. Insurance companies are trained to keep costs down. They limit the care of what they consider non-life-threatening illnesses. We feel this philosophy is not in the best interest of the patient and, in fact, may cause irreparable harm to the patient.

Insurance companies also restrict and deny what they consider to be "investigational" treatments even though these procedures have been shown to be effective and worthwhile.

Our first allegiance is to our patients. Our decision-making is based on what's best for the patient, not what's best for the insurance company.

If you feel your health is important to you and you want access to world-class arthritis treatment, then you've made the right choice with the Arthritis Treatment Center.

You'll receive treatments that will give you back your life.