



SUNSHINE COAST
ORTHOPAEDIC CLINIC

Treatment of Arthritis

Arthritis is inflammation and damage of the smooth gliding surface of the joint, the articular cartilage. The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis. Wear and tear arthritis is due to a primary problem in the articular cartilage. This can be genetic, developmental or traumatic. *eg:* due to fracture or ligament injury.

Inflammatory arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, lupus etc are due to a primary problem in the lining of the joint (synovium) which then causes damage to the articular cartilage as a secondary problem. Arthritis leads to pain, stiffness, dysfunction and inflammation of the joint involved.

There are many different types of surgery which may become necessary for the treatment of arthritis. The surgical options available are arthroscopy, osteotomy (realignment operation), joint replacement and fusion (stiffening of the joint) depending on the joint and damage involved.

In general, surgery for arthritis is indicated for pain and disability that is not settling with a more conservative approach. Techniques such as medication, physical therapy, lifestyle modification (work and play) should be considered before surgery.

With conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, a rheumatologist will use strong medications to modify the inflammation to the joint. Surgery is performed in conjunction with the rheumatologist to achieve the best possible outcome.