

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Osteoarthritis (OA)

**Osteoarthritis or OA makes your joints hurt or feel stiff after you rest and after activity. It usually affects the hands, low back, neck, hips and knees. OA can cause very bad pain, disability and may lead to a need for surgery. Here's what you can do.**



*Eating smaller portions helps you lose weight.*

#### **These tips can help your joints move better and hurt less.**

- If you are overweight, try to lose 5 to 10 pounds.
  - Eating smaller food portions helps you lose weight.
- Be active for 2-3 hours a week.
  - Walk, swim, or ride a bike.
  - Stretch your muscles and joints.
  - Exercise your hands.

Contact the Arthritis Foundation about a safe exercise class (water or land) near you: [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org). or call 1-800-283-7800.

**Tell your doctor** if you are having very bad pain in your joints.

#### **Ask your doctor about:**

- What exercises you can do.
- How to lose weight.
- How to help your pain.

#### **Ask your doctor if you need:**

- X-rays.
- Braces or a cane.
- To see a diet specialist.
- To see a physical therapist.
- To see an arthritis doctor (a rheumatologist).



*Tell your doctor about your joint pain.*

#### **Questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist:**

- What types of medicine are available to treat my OA? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many times a day should I use my OA medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- How do I use my OA medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are the side effects of my OA medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- How long will I need to use my OA medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- If I forget to use my OA medicine, what should I do? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can I use my medicine for my OA with my other medicines? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are there any foods or drinks I should **not** have while using my OA medicine? \_\_\_\_\_
- What other remedy can I use if my OA medicine is not working? \_\_\_\_\_



*Stretch your muscles.*

**My next appointment with the doctor is** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_