

HEALTH REPORT

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BETTER SOLUTIONS TO JOINT PROBLEMS THAN PAIN DRUGS AND JOINT REPLACEMENT SURGERY

The demand for total joint replacement – knees, hips, shoulders, etc., is expected to increase so dramatically by the year 2030 that there may not be enough orthopaedic surgeons to perform the operations, says the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons (AAOS).

Based on a review of the numbers of hip, knee and other joint replacement surgeries performed over the past decade, the AAOS estimated that the number of procedures for primary (first-time) total knee replacement would jump by 673 percent to 3.48 million a year in 2030. The number of primary total hip replacements would increase by 174 percent to 572,000. Partial joint replacements were projected to increase by “only” 54 percent.

A major cause of this epidemic of ruined joints is the widespread use of pain-relieving anti-inflammatory drugs such as naproxen (Aleve®). The trouble is that these drugs only relieve the pain, masking the underlying problem that is causing the inflammation in the first place.

Any doctor will tell you that inflammation is the body’s natural and healthy response to whatever trauma is affecting the joint, enabling the cells that repair damaged cartilage to accumulate and heal the tissues. Stopping inflammation with drugs prevents normal healing and permits chronic irritation that eventually destroys the joints.

Sore and inflamed joints can come from arthritis, gout, rheumatoid arthritis, an infection such as Lyme Disease, rheumatism, and of course from an injury. If you didn’t fall down or get kicked, it’s tough to know why a joint becomes sore and inflamed. Rather than ignoring the problem and hoping it goes away, or taking drugs to mask the pain, the best solution is to pinpoint the cause of the problem and address it with appropriate therapy. A responsible healthcare practitioner will try to discover the source of the inflammation and recommend treatment that will cure it rather than just hide it.

Chiropractic care, herbs, vitamins and minerals, Acupuncture, cold packs, physical therapy and stretching exercises — these natural approaches can also help to relieve pain and heal inflamed joints. Even if you have occasional bouts of joint pain and inflammation, you can help keep your joints healthy for a lifetime — your own joints!