

One Stop for Natural Health Care • Chiropractic • Therapeutic Massage • Low Level Laser



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Ask The
Experts®
on Chiropractic Care

Dr. April Ruzicki

Weight Gain and Your Pain

Many of us complain when we gain a few pounds over a season, holiday or time period...Christmas, winter, summer, vacation or college weight – whatever you want to call it. These couple pounds are not the source of joint pain, but if they are not lost and more pounds are added, slowly the weight gain may become a problem. Being overweight or obese increases the risk not only for cardiovascular diseases, some cancers and diabetes but also for musculoskeletal diseases such as osteoarthritis.

More than three million Canadians are affected by osteoarthritis, which can be defined as a degeneration of joint cartilage and also the underlying bone. Arthritis is a term used loosely, but essentially meaning inflammation of the joint (this can be with or without accompanying degenera-

tion); arthr = joint, itis = inflammation.

Our weight bearing joints, such as knees and ankles, are susceptible to excess weight gain as it causes stress to these joints, compounded by the inflammation our body produces. Our weight bearing joints actually sustain more force than we may realize. For every step you take on level ground a force of three to six times your body weight is exerted on your knee; for example: if you weigh 150lbs, each time your heel strikes the ground your knee endures a force of 450-900lbs! Now imagine being 20 lbs overweight...that adds an additional 60-120lbs of pressure on your knees every time you take a step!

In addition to joint pain and increased disease risk, being obese or severely overweight can lead to fatigue, difficulty breathing and/or a shortness of breath...this now becomes a vicious circle as people struggle to find the energy to exercise to lose the extra weight. Because of joint pain they need to be selective in the activities they choose to avoid further damage to their joints.

Being overweight or obese is not the single factor in developing osteoarthritis or

joint pain but can play a significant role in exacerbating the symptoms or speeding up the process. While chiropractic care isn't a weight loss treatment, it is very effective at helping joints function properly. This is key to minimizing joint pain and degeneration. As chiropractors we are also well equipped to advise you on living a healthy lifestyle, which can help in achieving weight loss goals.

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