



Arthritis NZ
Mateponapona
Aotearoa

2024

Arthritis NZ

Mateponapona Aotearoa

Annual Review

Living well with arthritis

More than 750,000 people in Aotearoa face pain and disability caused by arthritis.



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Strategic Initiative 1:

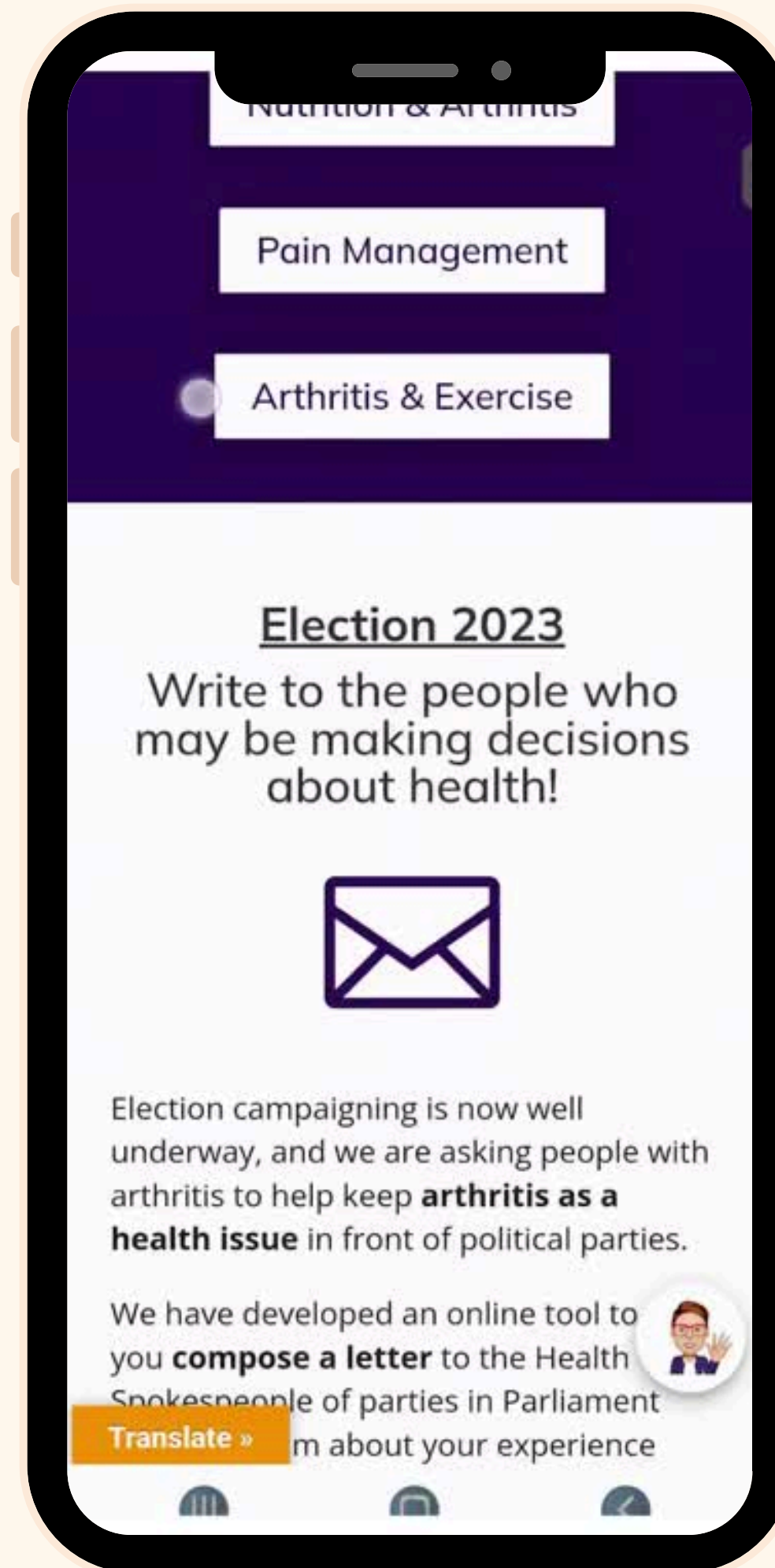
Build on awareness, partnerships and consumer voices

2000

consumer
emails sent to
political
spokespeople



Arthritis NZ
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48.5%

Increase in Arthritis
Assist cases



18%

Growth in
E-News subscribers



26%

Increase in
YouTube
engagement



106,000

WEBSITE VISITS



14,000

FOLLOWERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA





Strategic Initiative 2:

Developing, delivering and measuring services

Arthritis Assist

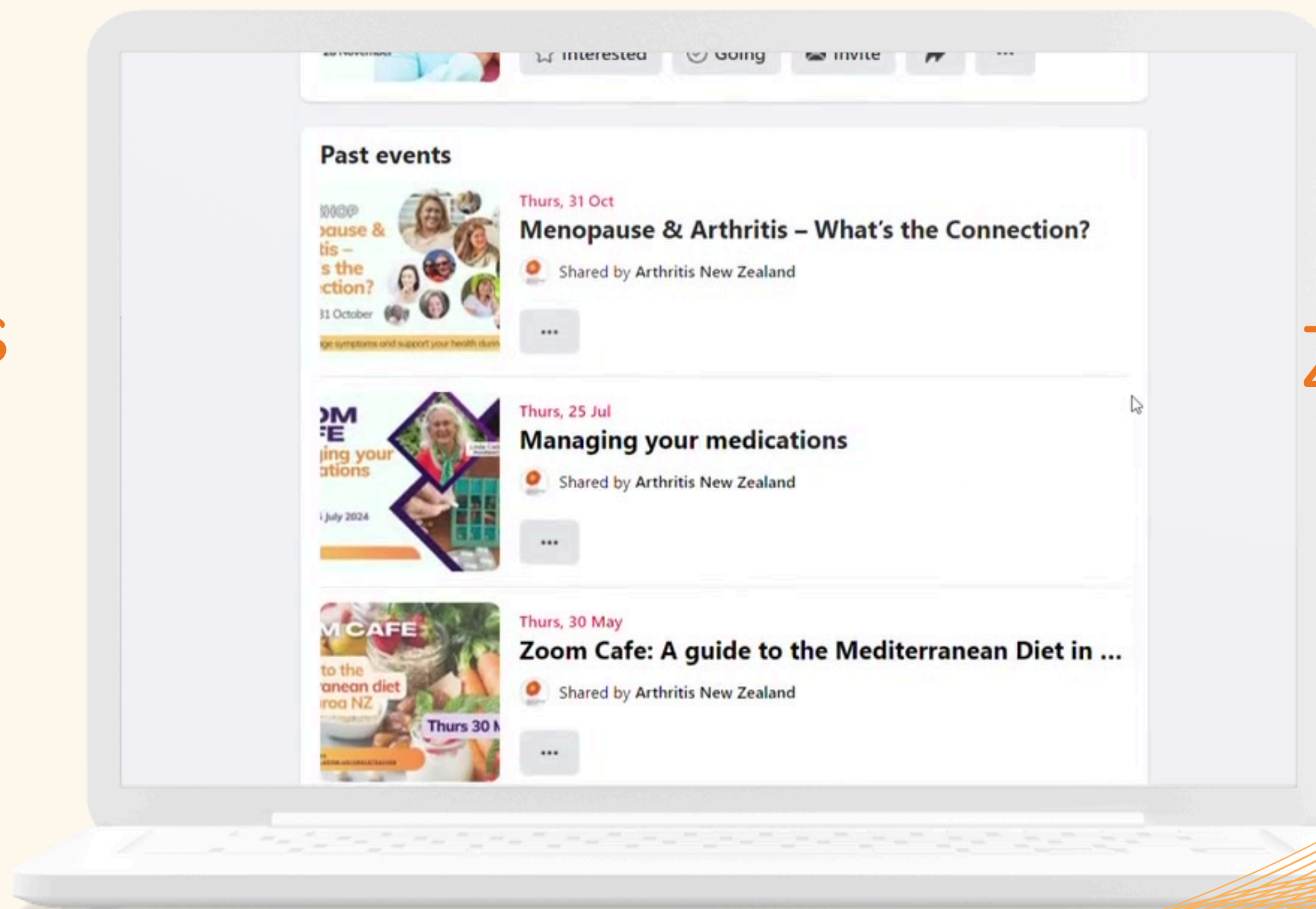


Arthritis Assist



The information you have sent me and the telephone call have all been very helpful. At times I feel very alone with my arthritis and it wonderful to have such a great organisation as yours available.

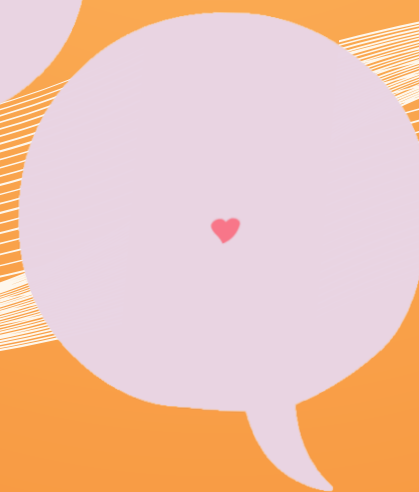
4
webinars



11
Zoom Cafe's

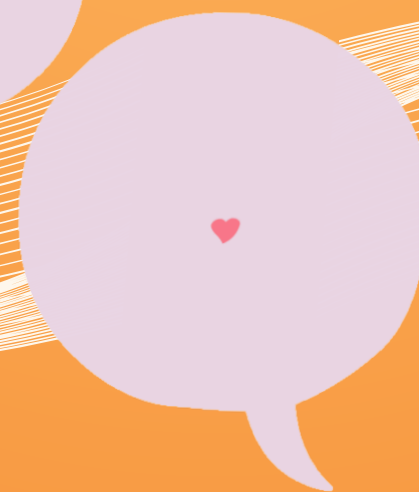
1,483

QUERIES ANSWERED ONLINE



48.5%

increase in Arthritis Assist cases





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TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING ARTHRITIS IN YOUR HANDS

Arthritis in the hands presents with painful joints, swelling, difficulty with movement, and limited function, like being unable to grip properly. Clinical interventions aim to reduce pain, control swelling, improve range of motion and improve the function of the hand, like gripping.

Precautions

As with all exercise advice for people with arthritis – always work within your comfort level and do not force any movements. No one can tell you how often or how long you should do any exercise. Your arthritis pain and discomfort is unique to you, and you will need to find your balance. Remember, a key thing to help you find your balance is: **too much exercise causes pain, too little exercise cause stiffness**. Trial different exercises for different periods and find your balance.

Remember

- Protect joints whenever possible during loading, with splints or aids
- Rest joints regularly, at night is easiest
- Joints need the full range of motion exercises every day
- Strengthen joint stabiliser muscles by doing the gentle exercises

Think about what load and stress goes through your hands when doing your favourite activities and then find ways to minimise force and load so that you can get on with life.

Hand exercises

Tendon gliding or "tai chi for fingers"

Start with your fingers together and your hand pointing up. Bend the tips of your fingers towards the floor, then carry on and make a fist, then let the tips of your fingers and your

hand move into a straight position.

Keep the movement smooth and do them with control. This exercise

gives the joints a full

range of motion exercises

about ten times per day. Contractions

and relaxation to move the fluids that

cause swelling in our joints. Try the

exercises on this fact sheet.



Arthritis NZ is a registered charity. Contact us at 0800 454 454 or visit our website at www.arthritisnz.org.nz or find us on social media.



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Arthritis Fact Sheet: Pain Management



RELAXATION - A TOOL TO REDUCE PAIN

Studies show mind-body therapies like relaxation can reduce muscle tension, fatigue and joint tenderness. They can help you sleep better, and improve mood and quality of life.

Long-term pain as a signal to consciously relax

The experience of pain can activate the 'fight-flight-freeze' (sympathetic) response. This is your body's way of protecting you from danger. Your body releases stress chemicals which keep you constantly ready to react. Unfortunately, this tension can increase your experience of pain.

You can change this response by making a conscious decision to relax. Learning how to manage pain by using relaxation techniques helps change your body chemistry. When you do this, you reduce the pain experience and allow your body to go back to the 'rest and digest' (parasympathetic) setting.

How can relaxation work for me?

Building relaxation strategies into everyday life helps move the body towards 'rest and digest.' Over time we recognise how it feels to really relax.

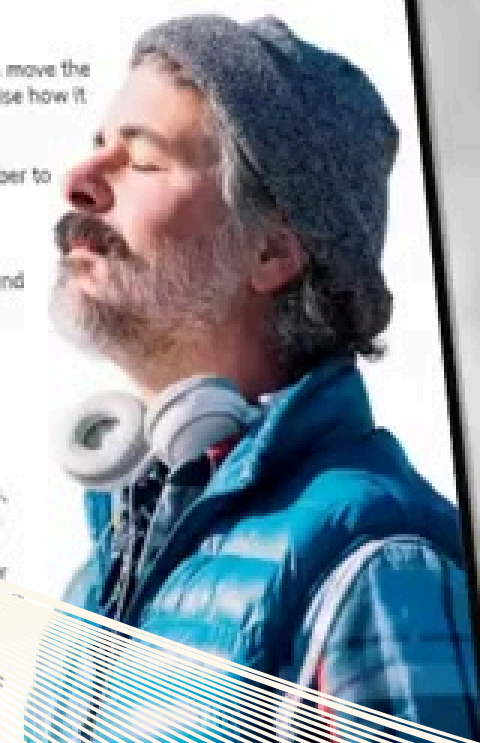
During a flare-up of symptoms, it's easier to remember to use a strategy if it is already a habit.

When we know how it feels to be relaxed, we can actively use relaxation as a tool to calm the body and mind and reduce pain.

Techniques to try:

Breathwork and Mindfulness

Mindfulness is being aware of your thoughts, feelings, and what you are experiencing in the present. As you become more aware of these, you become better able to manage them. For example, you become better able to recognise when you are tired & need to rest, or need to get out for some exercise, and it allows space for an experience of peace and quiet away from daily demands.



When you're struggling, contact Arthritis Support on 0800 663 483, or visit www.arthritis.org.nz or look for us on Social Media





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Arthritis Fact Sheet: Osteoarthritis



OSTEOARTHRITIS FLARE-UPS

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It happens when your joint breaks down faster than your body can repair it. Osteoarthritis is called a degenerative joint disease because it often gets worse over time, and it can't be cured. But there are many things we can do to slow it down and to help with pain and stiffness.

Sometimes symptoms of osteoarthritis can get worse for a short time and then improve. This is called a flare-up. You could notice more pain, stiffness, swelling, being less able to move, trouble sleeping or tiredness due to pain. A flare-up usually lasts for a few days and should be gone within a week or two.

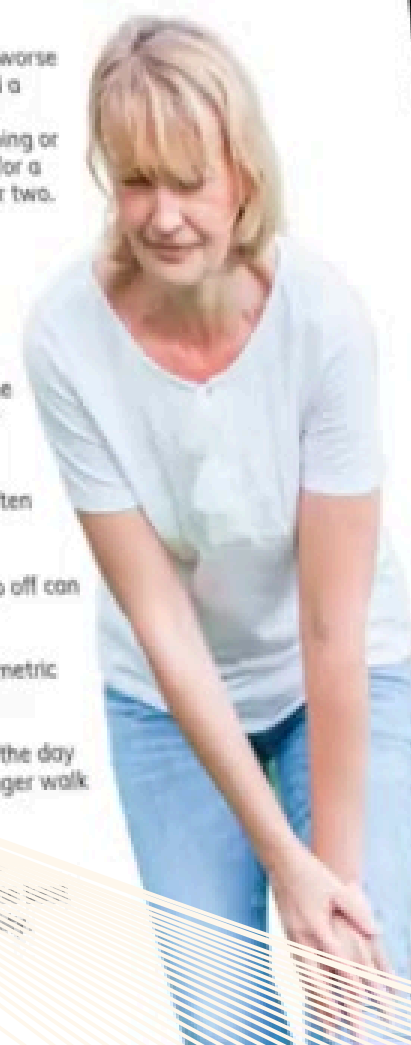
Common causes of flare-ups

More pain does not necessarily mean more joint damage. Sometimes flare-ups happen when bits of cartilage (the smooth part at the ends of the bone) or bone spurs irritate your joint. Bone spurs are small pieces of extra bone which form near the joint because of inflammation and can then break off. It's often not clear why a flare-up happens.

Identifying what may have set the flare-up off can be helpful in reducing future flares:

- cold or wet weather or a drop in barometric pressure
- using a joint more, for example, on the day you mowed the lawn for a much longer walk than you're used to

In general, keeping up with your exercise, particularly around the sore joint, is the best way to prevent pain and reduce recovery time.



For more information, contact Arthritis NZ on 0800 643 643 or visit arthritis.org.nz or look for us on Social Media





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Arthritis Fact Sheet:

Medicinal Cannabis

How do I get a prescription for medicinal cannabis in NZ?



Any registered doctor in New Zealand can prescribe CBD oil. Doctors are encouraged to only prescribe for a medical condition when conventional treatments are unsuccessful. The Cannabis Clinic has the following tips for those wanting a prescription from their GP:

- Email your GP first.** It will give them the chance to prepare and gather their thoughts. If they are flat out against it, you will find out before spending time and money with an in-person appointment. Try another GP if your usual one isn't open to the discussion.
- If appropriate, book a double appointment.** It is likely that the GP will not have all the information they need to make a prescription. Your GP will need to find out quite a bit of information from you and share it with you to ensure you get the correct prescription. A double appointment will allow time for this in a relaxed environment.
- Bring written information to support your request.** You may be the first person to ask for a medicinal cannabis prescription, so your doctor may not have all the information they need to do this. The Ministry of Health and Bpac have created a prescribing guide which your doctor has access to: [medicinal-cannabis-quick-ref.pdf](https://www.bpac.org.nz/medicinal-cannabis-quick-ref.pdf) ([bpac.org.nz](https://www.bpac.org.nz))
- Understand that all medicinal cannabis products are unapproved medicines for arthritis and pain management.** All cannabidiol (CBD) products are prescription medicines. The health professional must be satisfied that the brand of medicine they prescribe is appropriate for their patient (including having informed consent). The current body of research does not prove that CBD oil is a treatment for these health conditions. Sativex, a cannabis-based product, is approved as an add-on treatment for symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis but not for any other condition. You will need to sign a consent form stating you understand this if you are prescribed CBD oil for arthritis and pain.

For more information visit the Healthify website:

PLEASE NOTE: Arthritis New Zealand has not endorsed or recommended the use of medicinal cannabis. We are not a medical professional and do not provide medical advice. We are not a medical professional and do not provide medical advice. We are not a medical professional and do not provide medical advice.

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Arthritis Fact Sheet: Occupational Therapy



HOW CAN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY HELP YOU?

Occupational therapy is about enabling people to do the things they need and want to do.

Activities involved with self-care, leisure, and work can become difficult with an arthritis condition. Struggling to do tasks that enable us to remain independent can lead to increased anxiety, stress, and tension leading to increasing pain levels. An occupational therapist will assess your strengths and identify barriers that stop you participating in activities. They will put together a plan which may include equipment and aids, services, strategies, referrals, information, and resources to bridge the gap so you can find new ways of achieving tasks.

The do-it-yourself process



Step One: Analyse The Task

What specific tasks are difficult?

- Is it preparing food, transferring on/off the toilet or chair, showering, dressing, driving, stair climbing, hanging out the washing, or mobilising safely?

What factors are contributing to the problem?

- Environmental - is the toilet seat or chair too low, do the stairs need a handrail or lift?
- Physical capacity - is it due to tiredness, muscle weakness, stiffness, or pain?
- Task demands - does it take too long, is it too complicated?

Step Two: Find A Workable Solution

What equipment, strategies, or assistance could you put in place?

- Use equipment such as jar openers, ergonomic gardening tools, a raised toilet seat, a long-handled shoe horn, a walking stick, chair-raisers, or a clothes horse to manage tasks more easily. Equipment can be purchased through the Mobility Centre or Independent Living Charitable Trust.

- The Mobility Centre can help you move items around to make them easier to access.
- Place yourself in a comfortable position for the activity in short bursts over a few days.
- Plan your week ahead and do the most difficult tasks first.
- Become aware of posture and change it regularly to reduce muscle tension & pain.
- Use work-around strategies like shopping more often than lifting or get assistance from someone who can help.



visit arthritis.org.nz, contact Exeter's Arthritis Assistant on 0800 663 663 or look for us on social media





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Arthritis Fact Sheet: Inflammatory Arthritis



INFLAMMATORY ARTHRITIS FLARE-UPS

Inflammatory arthritis (IA) is a group of autoimmune diseases which occur when the immune system attacks healthy tissue, particularly the lining of the joints. This sets up a cycle of inflammation around the joint and may cause damage to nearby connective tissue, such as tendons and ligaments, as well as tiredness and general unwellness. IA can also affect other organs of the body.

IA includes many types of arthritis, such as Rheumatoid Arthritis, Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE), Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA), Reactive Arthritis, Sjögren's Syndrome, Psoriatic Arthritis, Ankylosing Spondylitis, Scleroderma, and many others.

While medications can keep your condition under control, from time to time you may experience a flare of joint pain and your other symptoms. An important aspect of self-management of an IA is recognising flares, learning what triggers them and what works for you to reduce their impact on your daily life. Flares are usually temporary; however, if a flare lasts longer than you normally experience or affects your quality of life, discuss this with your medical team.

Recognising a flare

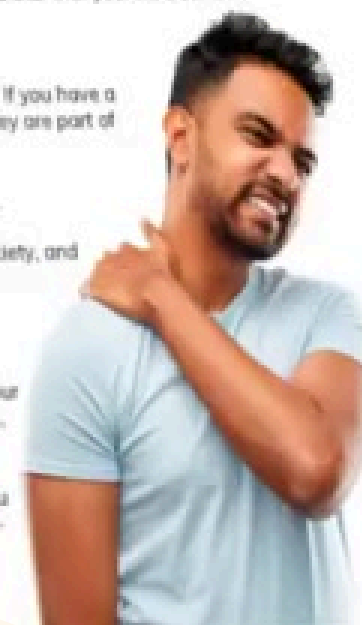
A flare is when symptoms of an IA temporarily worsen. If you have a flare it's not because you've done something wrong, they are part of your IA.

Symptoms to look out for:

- Increase in pain and swelling in one or more joints,
- Increased stiffness, especially in the morning,
- More tiredness, less mobility, trouble sleeping, anxiety, and
- emotional stress.

Predictable flares

Over time, you may notice patterns, or triggers of your IA – a thing or an event such as stress, lack of sleep, injury, other illnesses or infections, demanding physical activity, changes in medications or other things that happen in your life. A diary can help you keep track of these things set off your IA – including changes in your blood tests.



Unpredictable flares

The first flare experience can be scary. It's important to reach out to your rheumatology nurse, the Arthritis NZ helpline or reach out to your medical team online, or in person for advice and try some of the suggestions below to help manage your IA. For people who have managed flares in the past, a flare that comes on as quickly as it does may be more than expected may need to contact their medical team – it may be a sign that your medication may need to be changed.

Visit arthritis.org.nz for more information, or call 0800 000 000
or look for us on social media



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Arthritis Fact Sheet



SLEEP AND ARTHRITIS

It is very common for people with arthritis to have pain at night and trouble sleeping. Getting to sleep and staying asleep are the main problems. Research shows that pain and sleep have a two-way relationship: pain disturbs sleep, and trouble sleeping makes pain and disability worse during the day. We don't know how this relationship works yet. We do know that pain and trouble sleeping impact our bodies, our behaviour, and our quality of life. They also affect our mood and may also make us feel depressed. Research shows that treatment works best if we focus not just on pain but sleep too, so let's look at tips for getting a better night's sleep.

Setting up your sleep environment

- Make your bedroom a quiet, dark space with comforting touches that invite you to sleep.
- Use your bedroom as a space only for sleep and intimacy so you make that connection in your mind.
- Keep the room a bit cooler and add more bedding for warmth if you need it.
- Check your mattress is comfortable. Does it need turning or replacing? Adding a soft, thick overlay can be helpful. If you buy a mattress, check if there is an at-home trial period so you can swap or return for a full refund. A soft mattress is best for most people, and memory foam is recommended.
- An adjustable electric bed or La-Z-Boy recliner chair may be helpful (check with WINZ to see if you are eligible for funded equipment).
- Keep lights dim and use amber, red, yellow, or orange lighting.
- Try an aromatherapy diffuser and essential oils, such as lavender, to set the mood.
- Have a journal by your bed so you can write down any worries and mentally let them go – telling yourself you will leave them for the morning.

Predictable flares

- Set yourself a sleep routine – going to bed and getting up at about the same time every day.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and other drugs in the evening. Alcohol can make you feel sleepy, but when it wears off a few hours later you wake up.
- Avoid exercise in the evening as this can wake your body up.
- Make activities in the hour and a half before bed relaxing, such as colouring in or listening to gentle music.
- Avoid looking at phone or computer screens before bed as blue light stops your body making your natural sleep hormone melatonin.
- Massage in warming or anti-inflammatory creams such as Deep Heat, Zostrix, or Voltaren Emulgel.
- Have a warm shower to relax muscle tension.
- Do gentle stretching before bed.
- Place a wheat-bag in bed for sore joints.

Body support

Getting the right support is important. Think about which joints are causing sleeping difficulty – you may need to experiment to find the right support.

Neck

A firm neck pillow may help keep your neck supported if you are a back sleeper. Side sleepers may need a thicker pillow. Another option is to use a neck brace.

For more information, contact Arthritis Assist on 0800 663 400, or look for us on social media.





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Arthritis Fact Sheet: Osteoarthritis



TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING OSTEOARTHRITIS IN YOUR FEET AND ANKLES

Osteoarthritis can affect your ankle joint, also the foot joint directly under your ankle joint (the subtalar joint) and the joints of your toes, especially the big toe joint where it joins your foot (your first metatarsophalangeal joint).

Common problems associated with osteoarthritis in the feet:

- Pain – particularly with bending or weight-bearing activities such as walking or running.
- Stiffness – especially in the morning (lasting for less than 30 minutes) or if you haven't moved in a while.
- Loss of flexibility and movement.
- A cracking or grating feeling.

Your feet support your body weight, so it's not surprising if you experience pain or discomfort in this area.

The risk of developing osteoarthritis in your feet is commonly linked to:

- **Being overweight** – one of the best ways to take pressure off painful ankles and feet is to lose excess body weight.
- **Joint injuries** – a bone fracture or cartilage damage can lead to OA.
- **Your genes** – people with family members who have OA are more likely to develop it.
- **Age and female gender.**

Should I see a doctor?

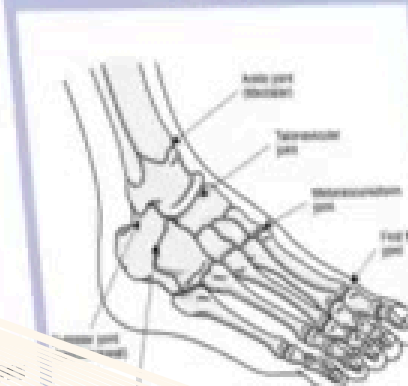
You should talk to your doctor or other health professional if your pain or symptoms bother you. They will ask you about your symptoms and examine you. Often osteoarthritis can be diagnosed without needing further tests. Sometimes an X-ray or blood test is needed if it is not clear what the cause of your symptoms is.

Managing osteoarthritis of the foot and ankle

Exercise and movement – It is essential to keep your joints moving. However, you may need to try different types of exercise if you have painful feet. There are two main types of exercise to try.

Stretching exercises – can help maintain and increase the range of movement of your joints.

Each foot is made up of 26 bones, 33 joints and more than 100 muscles, tendons and ligaments, which work together to provide support, balance and mobility!



Visit arthritis.org.nz or contact Arthritis Action on 0800 643 443
info@arthritis.org.nz or look for us on Social Media



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Living with Arthritis: When I'm in pain who can I ask?

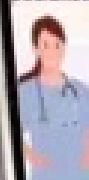


Primary Care - usually your first point of contact

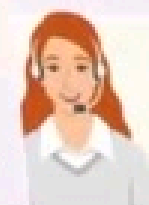
General Practitioner - (GP or medical doctor). Your GP is usually your main provider of health care and your first point of contact. Your GP can make referrals to specialists as needed.



Community Pharmacist - can help you understand your medicines and how to use them safely and correctly.



Practice Nurse - Can provide information and support coordinating your care with other members of your health team.



Arthritis NZ - Available to support you to understand how the health system works, your arthritis diagnosis and how to live well with arthritis: email - info@arthritis.org.nz or phone - 0800 663 463.

Secondary Care also known as Medical Specialists



Rheumatologist - is a doctor who specialises in diagnosis and medical treatment of joint, muscle and bone disorders. www.rheumatology.org.nz

Musculoskeletal Specialists - are doctors that assess and treat disorders of the Musculoskeletal system. www.nzmm.org.nz

Rheumatology Nurse - is a link between you and your rheumatologist. You can get advice and ask your rheumatology nurse for help between appointments with your rheumatologist.



Orthopaedic Surgeons - specialise in diagnosis and surgical treatment of bone, muscle, and joint disorders. www.nzos.org.nz



Allied Health Professionals - related to specific parts of the body, the workplace or mental wellbeing



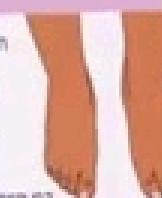
Dietitians - are experts in food and nutrition and can provide advice about healthy eating for medical conditions.

GP can make referrals to dietitians

www.dietitians.org.nz

Podiatrists - specialise in conditions affecting the feet. They can help with information around footwear, nail care and shoe inserts.

www.podiatristsboard.org.nz



Physiotherapists - can advise on exercise and many can use treatments to help you manage your pain and improve your mobility.



Therapists - can help you manage your pain and improve your mobility. They can also help you with your mental health and wellbeing.

Psychologists - can help with tools to cope with your pain and improve your mental health and wellbeing.



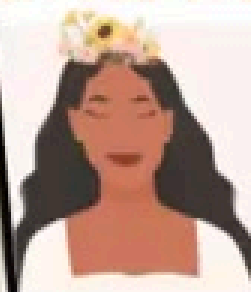
For more information, contact Arthritis NZ on 0800 663 463 or visit arthritis.org.nz





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Mental Wellbeing & Arthritis



A long-term arthritis condition brings with it many challenges. Every part of life can be impacted by pain, tiredness and changes in what we can do physically. Arthritis symptoms may stop us from taking part fully in our work, family life, social connections, loved hobbies, and sports. We can feel fearful and alone. All of this can affect our mental wellbeing, and how we feel about ourselves and our place in the world. Feeling sad, anxious or worried at times are normal reactions to coping with arthritis. Knowing where to go for support is important.

The four sides of wellbeing

Using the symbol of a house/whare, Sir Mason Durie created a model of health called Te Whare Tapa Whā (the four-sided house) identifying four cornerstones of health. It reminds us that health is about more than just physical wellness - all parts of who we are must be included to find balance and wellbeing.

As the foundation for the other four dimensions, the health of the land and the natural environment is strongly connected to your health and wellbeing. You can think about whenua as your place of belonging. Connection to the land and to nature has been shown to improve mental and physical wellbeing.

When coping with a long-term condition like arthritis, we need to take particular care to strengthen each wall to stay protected and encouraged. When physical pain and exhaustion challenges mental wellbeing our whare needs to be able to weather the storm and stay connected to the land/whenua.

TE WHARE TAPA WHĀ



How is your whare?

It's a good idea to check in with your whare, strengthening and what's missing.

Think about the five sides of your whare:

- What keeps each side in place?
- Which one feels strongest?
- Is there one that needs more support?
- What is one thing you could put in place to strengthen it?

Use this to identify what needs strengthening, security, and protection.



For more information, contact Arthritis Aotearoa on 0800 000 000 or look for us on social media.



Arthritis Assist

1,130
Clients supported



Arthritis Assist

412
phone calls



Arthritis Assist

277
website queries



Arthritis Assist

848

webinar registrations

*our highest yet for a webinar



Arthritis Assist

89%
say we helped

Arthritis Assist



4.3 out of 5 Star rating

FAMILIES CAMP 2024

FAMILIES CAMP 2024

You have given us community and connection with others who face similar challenges. Such fun for the children who deserve some joy with arthritis isn't much fun." -
Kerry, mum to Seth from Christchurch



TEENS CAMP 2024

There was such a welcoming and encouraging feeling and it was amazing to make new friends who had similar experiences to me.



TEENS CAMP 2024

I came away from camp feeling inspired from hearing others' stories, confident and supported.



TEENS CAMP 2024

I came away from camp feeling inspired from hearing others' stories, confident and supported.

- -Eleanor from Wellington





Strategic Initiative 3:

Equity - moving from talking to action



Te Ra o te Raukura and Pasifika 2024



Screened over **200** people for Gout arthritis



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Today, I learned more about gout than in the 10-15 years I've been dealing with it.



Strategic Initiative 4:

**Research – proactive and translational programmes
including clinical, social and economic research**

Received
15
Research grant
applications



Funded
6
Summer
scholarships





Strategic Initiative 5:
Generate funding

**Thank you to our generous
community of supporters**



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We thank the following trusts and foundations



We thank the following trusts and foundations



Beatrice Georgeson Trust



AOTEAROA
GAMING
TRUST



Air Rescue
and Community
Services

Room-Simmonds
Charitable Trust

Proudly managed by
perpetual guardian

Zelda Roberts
Charitable Trust
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David Ellison.
Charitable Trust
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Jack Jeffs
Charitable Trust

We thank our Principal sponsors and funders



We thank the following for including Arthritis NZ in their legacies



Estate of Frances Muriel Powell

James Hardymont

Edith Lillian Grace Tongue Trust

Estate Stanley Kingsford Garlick

Estate of Henry George Sparks

Estate of J A Wu (aka Timms)

Estate Joan Florence Kane

Estate of Dede May Gill

Thomas Dawson

Estate of Susan Mary Branch

Estate of Carol Lesley Matthewson

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Estate of Kathleen O'Malley

Estate of Matthew G Turton

Estate of Pamela Iris Whiteley

Estate of Rosemary Anne O'Connell

Estate of Henry George Sparks

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Estate of C & J Whitehead Family Trust

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Estate of Paul Alexander Crisp

Estate of V F Vendt

Estate of Lynley Sheryl Jones

Estate of Kathleen Walker

Maisie Hayes & Charlie Warr Memorial Trust

Estate of ARE Telford

We thank the following for including Arthritis NZ in their legacies

Estate Elizabeth Kennedy

Estate of Mary Josephine Dynan

Estate Phyllis A T Keyte

Estate RF Bowden

Estate of Joan Elizabeth Radcliffe

Estate of Rosemary Anne O'Connell

Estate John & Elsie Walsh Trust

Estate of Jill Stansfield

Estate of Pamela Iris Whiteley

Estate Margaret Nola Barrow

Estate Margaret Mary Glennie Jamieson

Estate George B Vincent

Estate Margery May Dwerryhouse

Estate of Paul James Marquet

ESTATE OF M H FLETCHER

Estate of Cornelia Johanna Van der Hulst

Maisie Hayes & Charlie Warr Memorial Trust

Estate Elizabeth M Donaldson

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Appointed trustee 1/7/2018



Ben Sutherland

Appointed trustee 27/11/2020



Richard Edge (Deputy Chair)

Appointed trustee 7/3/2019



Sue McGlashan

Appointed trustee 26/11/2021



Ben Blinkhorne

Appointed trustee 24/11/2018



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(Rheumatologist - NZRA Representative)**

Appointed trustee 1/3/2023



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Appointed trustee 29/11/2019



Sasha Kljakovic

Appointed trustee



Jacob Toresen Pollock

Appointed trustee 29/11/2019



Te Huia Bill Hamilton

Appointed trustee



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Ngā Mihi Nui

Thank you