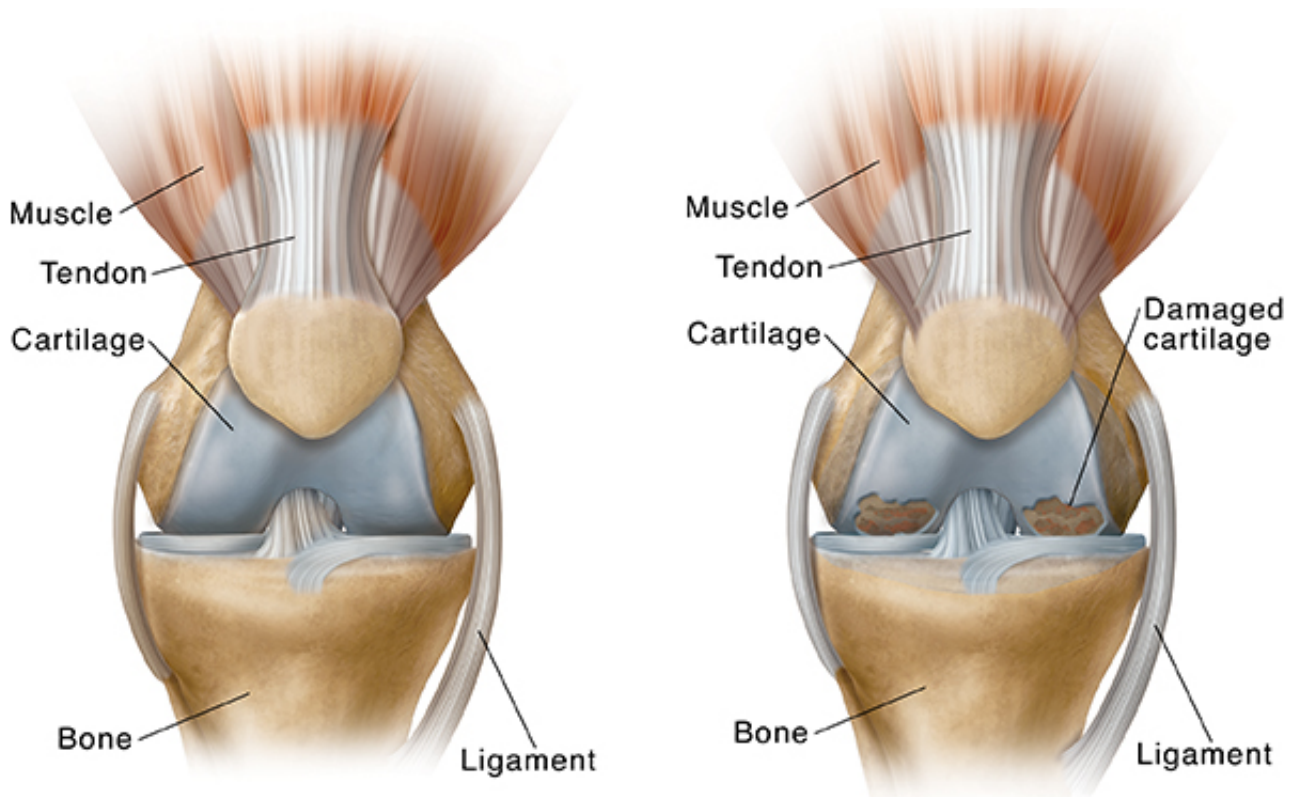


What Is Osteoarthritis?

There are about 100 different types of arthritis. In general, arthritis means problems with the joints. A joint is a point in the body where 2 or more bones come together. Arthritis may also cause problems in the tissue near the joints, including muscles, tendons, and ligaments. And, in some types of arthritis, the entire body can be affected.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is sometimes called degenerative joint disease, or wear-and-tear arthritis. It's the most common type of arthritis. In OA, the cartilage wears away. Cartilage is a slick tissue that covers the ends of the bones. It acts as a cushion and allows them to glide smoothly against each other. When the cartilage wears away, bone rubs against bone. This causes pain, swelling, stiffness, and difficulty moving. Risk factors for developing OA include obesity, being older than 40, past joint trauma, concomitant inflammatory arthritis, repetitive joint use, and a family history of OA.



Normal knee

Knee with arthritis

Symptoms

OA can affect any joint. Weight-bearing joints, such as the hips and knees, are often affected. Common symptoms are joint pain and stiffness. Pain and stiffness may get worse with inactivity or overuse. For example, you may have more stiffness first thing in the morning, usually for less than 30 minutes. Or you may have stiffness after sitting for a long time. This might be while sitting at a movie. You may also have more pain in your hips or knees if you walk farther than you normally do.

Other common symptoms are:

- Weak muscles
- Unstable or wobbly joints

- Grinding or crackling noises with motion
- Joints with swelling or bumps
- Unable to bend and straighten joints (reduced range of motion)

If you have any of these joint changes, make an appointment to see your healthcare provider. The two of you can work together to create a treatment plan that may help lessen your pain and stiffness and prevent symptoms from getting worse.

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