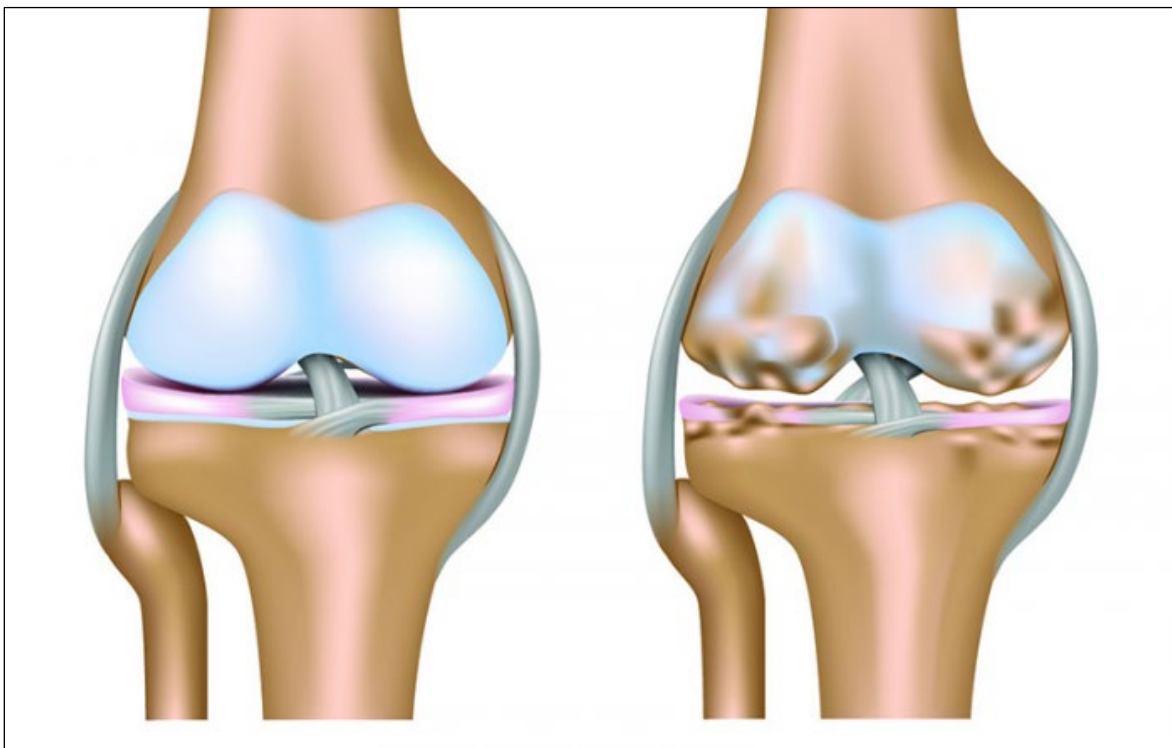


Do I Really Need A Joint Replacement?

DO I REALLY NEED A JOINT REPLACEMENT?

- First and foremost I believe it is important to understand that the most common reason for a joint replacement is **arthritis**, most commonly osteoarthritis which is also often called 'wear and tear' arthritis.
- Arthritis to an orthopedic surgeon is not just a joint that is swollen and painful but is actually the physical **LOSS** of articular cartilage.
- Articular cartilage is the smooth shiny white surface at the end of the bone that provides a frictionless environment for the joint to move in space.
- The loss of that articular cartilage is what we call arthritis.
- It is important to note that unfortunately once the cartilage has been lost there is no way to regrow that same healthy cartilage.
- There is no pill or no injection that has been able to clearly demonstrate regrowth of the cartilage, and thus reversal of that arthritis
- Additionally, since arthritis is a **LOSS** of cartilage, there is no surgery to "remove" the arthritis.



Normal Cartilage (blue)

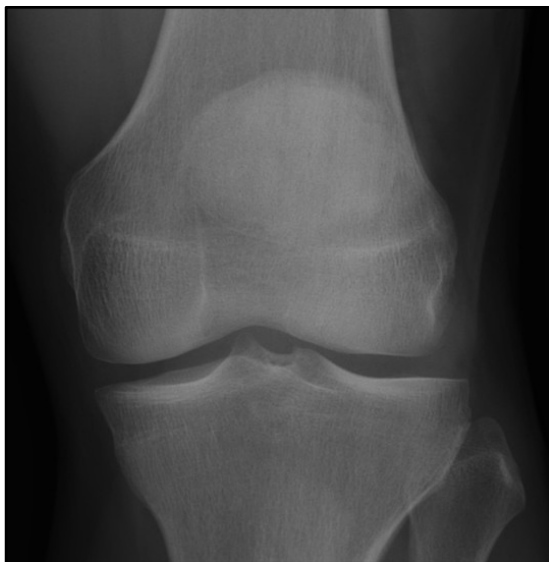
Arthritis

SYMPTOMS OF ARTHRITIS

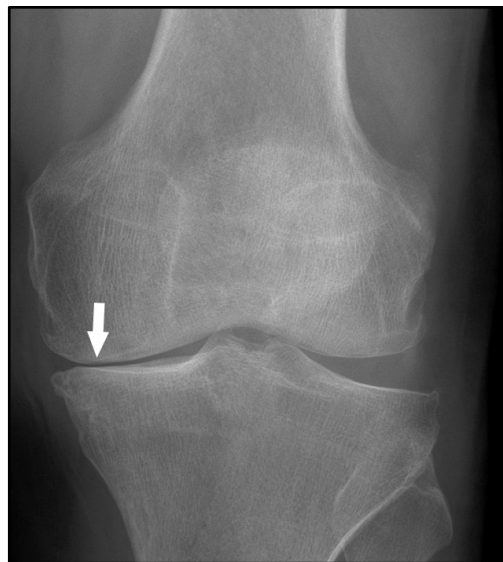
- Gradually increasing pain
- Swelling, tenderness
- Cracking or popping
- Decreasing ROM

XRAY FINDINGS

- Joint space narrowing
- Osteophytes (i.e. bone spurs)
- Subchondral sclerosis (i.e. hardening of the bone)
- Subchondral cysts
- Symptoms do not always correlate with Xrays.
 1. It is important to treat your SYMPTOMS, and not the Xray.
- If your Xrays do not demonstrate these findings, you may be a candidate for **joint preservation** treatment options



Normal



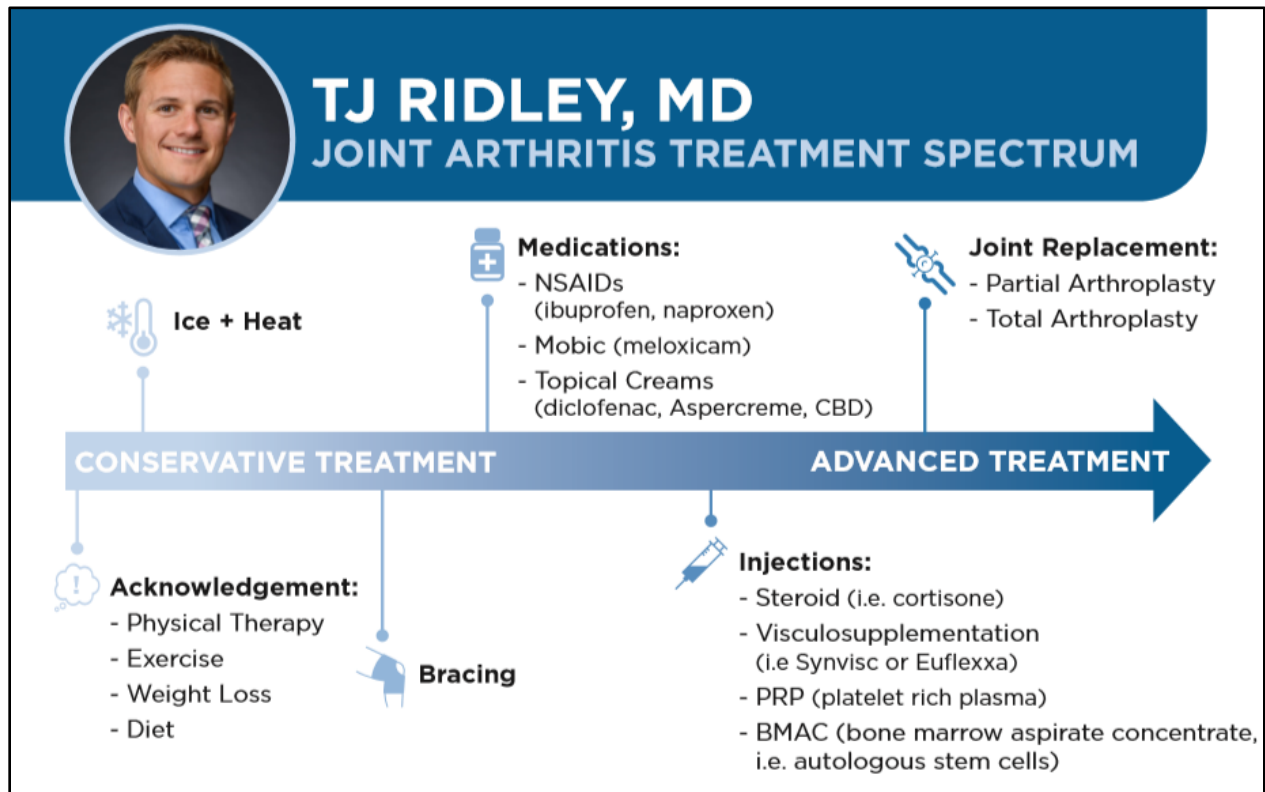
Severe Arthritis

JOINT ARTHRITIS TREATMENT OPTIONS

- There is a wide variety of treatment options for arthritis ranging from conservative options to more invasive options.
- **Acknowledgement** - Arthritis is not life threatening and can certainly be treated with what we call “benign neglect.” In other words, do nothing, live with it.
- **Activity** - Physical Therapy, aerobic exercise, weight loss, diet
- **Ice and/or heat** - Ice helps to decrease swelling and inflammation, whereas heat helps to loosen tight muscles or stiff joints.
- **Bracing** - There are a multitude of bracing options. These range from sleeves to provide compression, hinged braces to provide stability, or unloader braces to help unload certain areas of the knee.
- **Medications** - NSAIDs, topical creams (diclofenac, aspercreme, CBD)

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch Dr. Ridley’s Patient Education Video on Joint Arthritis

- **Injections** - Steroid, viscosupplementation, PRP, BMAC. The goal of each of these injections is the same: to decrease inflammation and pain. None of these injections have shown to reliably regrow cartilage or reverse the arthritis.
- **Surgery** - Joint replacement, partial or total, more information on joint replacement can be found here



WHAT CAN I DO TO STOP OR SLOW THE ARTHRITIS? CAN I MAKE IT WORSE?

- I generally tell patients there isn't much we can do to here. Treatment is really about managing your pain, and not about altering the progression of the arthritis.
- There are three things you can really do to maintain the health of your joint which are:
 1. **Weight loss** - simply reducing the force going through your joint with every step
 2. **Exercise** - motion is lotion as I like to say
 3. **Tobacco** - smoking is harmful to the collagen make up of our bodies, and therefore detrimental to the health of our cartilage.

DO I NEED A JOINT REPLACEMENT?

- A joint replacement is helpful to patients **with arthritis** who have exhausted the conservative options above.
 - Patients without arthritis but with other cartilage injuries may benefit from **joint preservation** treatment options
- The indication for a joint replacement is not based solely on an Xray. Its about your symptoms and acceptable function.
- The decisions to pursue a joint replacement should be after a shared discussion between the surgeon and the patient.
- Only you as the patient can truly decide when you can no longer tolerate the pain or function of your joint.

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