

Arthritis

Arthritis is a disease characterized by [the inflammation of the cartilage and lining of the body's joints](#). Inflammation causes redness, warmth, pain and swelling. [Over 4 million Canadians suffer from arthritis](#). It is estimated that [by the year 2020, over 6 million Canadians will have arthritis](#). The primary targets for arthritis are people over the age of 50. Arthritis is a [major cause of foot pain](#). This is because [each foot has 33 joints](#) which can become affected by the disease.

There are many different types of arthritis. The [most common type is called osteoarthritis](#). Osteoarthritis causes excessive strain and the wearing away of cartilage in the joints of the foot. Movement becomes very difficult and painful. The pain and swelling worsens while standing or walking, and stiffness usually occurs after periods of rest.

CAUSES

There are many causes of arthritis. [Heredity](#) plays a major role. However, arthritic symptoms can develop due to many other factors. Some of these include [bacterial and viral infections](#), prescription and illegal [drugs](#), traumatic [injuries](#), and [bowel disorders](#) such as ileitis and colitis.

[Forefoot problems](#) such as hammer toes, claw toes, mallet toes, and bunions [often develop as a result](#) of arthritis, particularly [Rheumatoid arthritis](#). Problems can also develop in the [heel and ankle area due to the erosion of the involved joints](#).

PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Conservative treatment (non-surgical treatment) of the arthritic foot includes [proper footwear, orthotics, and/or forefoot supports](#). [Arthritic footwear should provide](#) the following benefits:

- ▶▶ High, wide [toe box](#) (high and wide space in the toe area)
- ▶▶ [Removable insoles](#) for fitting flexibility and the option to insert orthotics if necessary.
- ▶▶ [Rocker soles](#). These soles are designed to facilitate ambulating (walking) and to reduce stress and pain at the ball-of-the-foot.

Arthritic footwear [should also accommodate swelling](#) of the foot. [Orthotics designed to provide comfort, support and extra cushioning are also recommended](#). Orthotics made with a material called [Plastazote](#) are often recommended because they [mold to your feet to provide customized comfort](#). [The proper footwear and orthotics will reduce pressure to provide a comfortable and healthy environment for the foot](#).

Forefoot supports such as gel toe caps, gel toe shields, gel toe straighteners and others can often provide relief.

As always: If the problem persists, consult your foot doctor