

PATIENT GUIDE

The Knee Arthritis *Roadmap*

Practical, honest information to help you reduce pain, improve mobility, and take control of your knees. Here is a clear look at your options, from simple first steps all the way to surgery.

UNDERSTANDING KNEE ARTHRITIS

Knee arthritis happens when the smooth cartilage that cushions your joint gradually wears away. Without that protective layer, the bones begin to rub together, which leads to pain, swelling, and stiffness. The good news: there are many options, both nonsurgical and surgical, that can help you stay active.

Common causes

- Age-related wear and tear (osteoarthritis)
- Previous injuries (ligament or meniscus tears)
- Genetics or family history
- Inflammatory conditions like rheumatoid arthritis

Common symptoms

- Pain with activity, or even at rest
- Stiffness, especially in the morning
- Swelling and warmth around the joint
- A grinding or popping sensation

YOUR TREATMENT ROADMAP

- 1 Lifestyle & activity.** Losing even a little weight reduces stress on the knee; gentler, low-impact activity eases symptoms.
- 2 Exercise & physical therapy.** Strengthening the muscles around the knee improves support and reduces pain. One of our most effective non-operative tools.
- 3 Medications.** Acetaminophen or anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen; sometimes prescription options, guided by what's safe for you.
- 4 Injections.** Steroid injections, gel injections (hyaluronic acid), and biologics (PRP, or bone-marrow / fat-derived signaling cells often marketed as "stem cells," which help coordinate healing rather than grow new tissue).
- 5 Surgery.** When non-operative options no longer help: arthroscopy (limited role), realignment (osteotomy), partial knee replacement, or total knee replacement.

LEAST INVASIVE

EVERYDAY CHANGES → SURGERY

MOST INVASIVE

Quick tip. Staying active, even with gentle exercise like walking, swimming, or cycling, helps keep your joints healthy. Motion is medicine for arthritis.

MYTHS VS. FACTS

MYTH Only older people get knee arthritis.

FACT It can affect younger patients too, especially after an injury.

MYTH Exercise makes arthritis worse.

FACT Safe, appropriate exercise actually protects your

MYTH You can "clean out" arthritis with a scope.

FACT Arthroscopy can smooth cartilage and remove debris, but it isn't actually removing the arthritis.

MYTH Weather doesn't affect arthritis.

FACT Some people are sensitive to pressure and

joints.

MYTH Surgery is the only option.

FACT Many nonsurgical treatments can provide real relief.

temperature shifts. The science is mixed, but patient experiences are valid.

TAKING CONTROL

See a doctor if

- Pain interferes with your daily activities
- You notice swelling, locking, or your knee giving out
- You've tried simple treatments without improvement

Questions to ask your doctor

- What type of arthritis do I have?
- What treatments are best for me right now?
- When should I consider surgery?

Ready when you are. Whether you're at the first step or wondering about surgery, we'll give you an honest read on where you are and what makes sense next. Learn more at [wichmanortho.com](https://www.wichmanortho.com).

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