

The management of osteoarthritis involves both pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches to ease pain and minimize the loss in function. The drugs used to treat osteoarthritis can be classified as symptom-modifying (drugs that improve pain and joint function) or structure-modifying (drugs that alter the progression of joint damage, in particular cartilage loss) (McColl, 2004). Symptom-modifying drugs include analgesics such as paracetamol and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

Associated risk factors and possible causes of osteoarthritis comprise:

- Age
- Female versus Male sex
- Obesity
- Lack of Osteoporosis
- Occupation
- Sports Activities
- Prior injury
- Muscle weakness
- Proprioceptive deficits
- Acromegaly
- Calcium crystal deposition disease

The main joints affected are hand inter-phalangeal joints, spine, knees and hip.

The symptoms include joint pain that worsens with use that is alleviated with rest, stiffness and functional impairment.