

the **joinTed** Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT newsletter

March 2017

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Osteoarthritis Healthy Weight For Life Program

Inflammatory Arthritis/Cardiovascular Disease

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Seniors Expo

.... and more

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These are some of the models we have acquired for demonstrating various arthritic conditions when giving presentations or speaking to clients.

1. Degenerative bone diseases of the hip
2. Rheumatoid arthritis hand
3. Osteoarthritis hand
4. 4-stage osteoarthritic shoulder

**The Arthritis
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Northern Territory Inc.**
**Arthritis &
Osteoporosis NT**
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of AONT.

From the Board

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2017.

Although office opening hours were due to re-commence on January 16, because of air conditioning problems, we got off to a slightly later start than planned. However, things were soon back in full swing as we geared up for several events in February.

Firstly, Ruth and Hilary attended a training course for Take Charge of Pain facilitators. This was to upgrade their knowledge of the program and held in the premises of Arthritis South Australia, the devisors of the course.

The Defence Community Organisation held their Welcome to the Top End Expo for new families posted to the NT. We once again had a stall in order to inform the newcomers about the services we provide. A free raffle and some "skulls and bones" lollies for the kids drew a number of people to our stall. The raffle winner was our local MP, Mr Luke Gosling OAM, who chose to donate the Wave Pool pass to a family who are disadvantaged or in need. We delighted our prize will be used for such a worthwhile cause.

In recent weeks our treasurer Ruth attended two information sessions relating to our organisation funding and structure.

The Australian Charities report 2015
In January 2013 our charity registration details were transferred from the Australian Taxation Office to the newly founded Australian Charities Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). This came about through our incorporation under the NT Associations Act. We currently have annual reporting obligations to both the ACNC and the NT Department of Business. At the Darwin presentation of the Charities Report, we were advised of the expectation that eventually there will just be the one annual report required, to the ACNC, to satisfy the obligations of both incorporation and registration as a charity.

NT Government funding

Through the NT Community Health, we have enjoyed recurrent funding for terms varying from one to three years, based on a legacy system. This will continue for now, even though the Department had worked for some time

developing a newer style of grants management system. Over the next year or so it is expected that further funding from the NT Government will be through Grants NT, a whole of Government system. Through these funding agreements we will continue to have separate six monthly reporting obligations, both financial and performance. Like many community based health organisations we are known as External Service Providers (ESPs), complementing the public health system.

There have been some changes to the Board recently. Denis Power has retired and Peg Gellert, our former VP, has been appointed President. Consequently Margaret Murray, previously an ordinary Board Member, has taken on the role of Vice President. Additionally, we would like to welcome a new member to the Board—Mitzi Ferguson. We would like to thank Denis for his contribution to the Board and our association over the last eight years.

Despite planning, advertising and promotion, we did not have quite enough starters to run the February Take Charge of Pain program. We will be running it again soon, so please contact the office to express your interest if you would like to participate. If we have your contact details on file we can let you know the dates and times when they have been set.

Arthritis Awareness Week 2017 will begin Sunday 28 May and end on Saturday 3 June. This fits in very well with our annual participation in the Seniors Expo held on June 2—see back page. Once again we will have an interactive information stall at this popular event.



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Making The Most Of Your Visit To A Doctor

Your general practitioner (GP or local doctor) is usually your first stop for health care. Your GP can help you coordinate your overall health care, including making referrals to specialists to help manage your arthritis if needed. Your GP clinic may also have a practice nurse who can provide information and oversee your care with other members of your health care team.

To get the most out of a visit to your GP or other health professional it is important to be prepared.

Here are some tips:

- Think about, and write down, the questions you want to ask before your visit.
- Always take x-rays and test results related to your condition to your consultation.
- Consider taking a family member or friend with you as a second set of ears.
- Ask your doctor or health professional to explain any information that you did not understand.
- Feel free to ask questions, especially about the benefits, side effects and costs of treatments.
- Write down any important information or instructions that you are given.
- Contact Arthritis & Osteoporosis NT for access to information or for any further questions you have about your condition.



Questions your doctor will usually ask:

- How long have you experienced pain?
- Which joints are affected?
- When you get pain what seems to cause it?
- What makes the joint feel better or worse?
- Does anyone else in your family have arthritis or joint pain?

Important: Arthritis can get worse if left untreated. It is important to see your doctor as early as possible to get a proper diagnosis.

The information for this article has been summarised from the Arthritis Australia booklet 10 steps for living well with arthritis. To order contact AONT on 1800 011 041.

Inflammatory Arthritis and the Increased Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

Most people are familiar with the impacts arthritis can have on your bones and joints. However, many don't realise how a diagnosis of arthritis can put you at risk for other health conditions. Research has shown that people with inflammatory forms of arthritis have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. This is especially true for the 445,000 Australians living with rheumatoid arthritis (RA).

Research reveals that at least 50% of premature deaths in people with RA are associated with some form of cardiovascular disease. People with RA are also more likely to be admitted to hospital due to cardiovascular issues than the general population

Inflammatory arthritis: A group of arthritic conditions that affect the body's immune system. E.g. rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, gout, etc.

Cardiovascular disease: Diseases of the heart and blood vessels. E.g. hypertension (high blood pressure), coronary artery disease, heart attack, stroke, etc.

This information highlights the need for people living with RA (and other forms of inflammatory arthritis) to make sure they are being regularly monitored by their healthcare team for cardiovascular risk factors.

If you have arthritis, take time to talk to your doctor about what you can do to minimize your risk of heart disease. Lifestyle changes, like diet and exercise, can go a long way in helping to keep you healthy, so make time to have these conversations.

Although this information may seem overwhelming, being aware of the risks associated with your diagnosis can help you take charge of your health.



Supporting arthritis research

Research is the key to finding better ways to prevent, treat and hopefully cure arthritis.

With a national research grants program and strong advocacy for increased government research funding, national and state arthritis foundations are spearheading the effort to further our knowledge of arthritis and search for cures.

National arthritis research program

Arthritis South Australia provides valuable funds towards the national arthritis research program run by Arthritis Australia. This year, \$900,000 has been awarded for a range of research projects designed to further our knowledge of arthritis, improve treatment and management, and search for cures.

Highlights include research into

- The effectiveness of krill oil in managing knee osteoarthritis
- Improving our understanding of the link between obesity and osteoarthritis with the aim of identifying new treatments
- Improving our understanding and treatment of lupus (systemic lupus erythematosus)
- Preventing bone erosion and pain sensitisation in rheumatoid arthritis
- Understanding the causes of inflammation in ankylosing spondylitis
- Investigating the effectiveness of colchicine as a treatment for osteoarthritis of the hand
- The value of high speed resistance and balance training to reduce the risk of falls in older people with knee osteoarthritis

Investigating a potential treatment for virus-induced forms of arthritis such as Ross River Fever, for which there are currently no specific treatments.

‘Our national program funds the breadth of research from basic laboratory research into the mechanisms of disease, through to clinical projects to improve treatments and quality of life for people with arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions,’ says Ainslie Cahill, CEO of Arthritis Australia.

‘We are the largest non-government funders of arthritis research in Australia, but with more than 100 types of arthritis, we need much more funding for research if we are to achieve our hope of finding cures.

‘This is why we are actively advocating to government to increase research funding for arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions as one of our key priorities,’ she said.

Advocating for increased government research funding

Arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions are the most common and disabling chronic conditions in Australia. They are also the third most costly group of chronic conditions in terms of health spending, costing well over \$6 billion a year or about 8% of disease expenditure.

Yet government funding for research into these conditions is lower than for any other major chronic disease group and has been falling in recent years.

‘We have been consistently putting a strong case to the government about the need to increase arthritis research funding and I really feel that our message is finally starting to be heard,’ said Ms Cahill.

‘In particular, we currently have a real opportunity with the establishment of the government’s new Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF).’

The MRFF has recently been set up to provide increased funding for strategic and priority driven medical research. It will complement funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council which mainly allocates funds for investigator driven research projects.

‘Arthritis Australia has had input into every stage of the government’s consultations on the development of the MRFF to ensure that arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions get the attention and funding they deserve.

‘In addition we have submitted some exciting proposals to the government for potential future funding from the MRFF.

‘A key project we have sought funding for is the development of a national arthritis biobank,’ Ms Cahill said.

‘The biobank will collect, store and analyse biological samples from people with arthritis and link them to clinical information. It will provide an invaluable resource for researchers investigating the genetic and environmental risk factors for the onset and progression of arthritis. It will also enable the development of new therapies as well as safer and more effective use of existing therapies.

‘If funded, the biobank, together with our other proposals, will help to achieve a quantum leap in the quality and utility of research in the musculoskeletal field.’

*Franca Marine
Policy and Government
Relations Manager,
Arthritis Australia*



Osteoarthritis Healthy Weight For Life™ Program

This is a specialised knee and hip osteoarthritis management program which is available at **no cost to eligible members of participating health funds**. The program has been designed to help you stand up to joint pain and get back to living life.

The step by step program consists of 3 phases, run over 18 weeks. Each 6 week phase includes:

- Portion control eating plan (including KicStart™ VLCD meal replacements)
- Gentle activity and physiotherapist-developed strength, balance and mobility exercises
- Personalised online symptom, progress and satisfaction tracking (phone and mail alternatives also available)
- Personal motivation, support and advice via phone, SMS, email, message board and mail

General clinical eligibility criteria for a fully funded program are:

✓ Current or historical diagnosis of knee or hip osteoarthritis supported by radiological evidence (X-ray or MRI) or an incidental finding from a previous arthroscopy

AND

✓ Body mass index (BMI) >28

AND

✓ According to medical opinion, AT LEAST ONE of the following:

* Knee or hip symptoms that have (or are likely to in the foreseeable future) necessitate referral to an orthopaedic surgeon for investigation or evaluation for a joint replacement procedure

OR

* An existing knee or hip joint replacement that has developed symptoms that could benefit from weight loss, improved fitness and muscle strength

OR

* A knee or hip joint replacement procedure is planned and weight loss, improved fitness and muscle strength is desirable.

(There are a few other criteria which are detailed on the website.)

To learn more about how the Osteoarthritis Healthy Weight For Life™ program can help you can break the cycle of pain and discomfort and get back to the things you enjoy, visit the website <http://oa.hwfl.com.au>. Here you can review the Program Overview and the Program Phases.

Alternatively, contact the Osteoarthritis Healthy Weight For Life team on 1800 226 180 (free call).

Good Eats For Strong Bones FETTUCCINI WITH MUSHROOM SAUCE

Ingredients

1 tbsp (15ml) olive oil
250g (1/2 lb) sliced mushrooms
1 leek, sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tbsp flour
385ml can light evaporated milk
1/2 tsp dried thyme
Pepper
375g pkt fettuccini
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley



Directions

- In a saucepan heat oil over medium heat.
- Add mushrooms, leek and garlic; cook until mushrooms release liquid.
- Stir in flour; cook, stirring, for one minute.
- Gradually add milk, whisking constantly.
- Add thyme and pepper; continue to cook for 5 minutes or until thickened.
- In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta until al dente. Drain.
- Toss pasta with mushroom sauce and garnish with parsley.

Calcium: 323mg per serve Serves 4

FROM THE EDITOR

*Hello members and friends of
AONT.*

*Just a brief note to let you know
how much I would welcome and
appreciate some future input from
you readers.*



It may be an easy, nutritious recipe you would like to share. Or perhaps a poem or an amusing anecdote. Even better, it could be a personal account of how you deal with your condition.

Also of value would be suggestions for newsletter items; such as requests for information on topics you would like to know more about.

Forward any contributions to me at the AONT office. The next Newsletter is due to come out in late June and the deadline for items to be included is June 9th.

Hoping to hear from many of you,

Peg Gellert

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Leave a bequest

Bequests are a powerful and effective way to give support to the foundation beyond your lifetime.

Remembering us in your will can provide AONT with additional future funds with which to continue our work.

A bequest is simple to arrange and your choice of bequest can vary depending on your situation.

We advise you to discuss your wishes with your family and consult a lawyer for the correct procedure.

COTA's Seniors Expo 2017



At the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory Friday 2nd June from 10am to 2pm.

Described as a "very special community" event, this is a wonderful opportunity to connect with the seniors community face-to-face, to provide information about activities, services and products and showcase what is happening all in a 'one-stop' environment.

The broad theme of SENIORS EXPO is '**age friendly in practice**' which reflects COTA NT's aim to help create not just a 'senior-friendly' Territory, but a Territory that is 'age-friendly'.

EXPO will appeal across generations and will celebrate and recognise seniors' contribution and their importance to the whole community.

The event will once again be held in the beautiful grounds of the museum, with stalls on the lawns and performance in the undercroft area. There will be stalls, performances, live music, refreshments and opportunities to join in with activities.

**Be sure to call by the Arthritis &
Osteoporosis NT stall at the Expo
for a chat, some information and
a bit of fun.**

Help at hand for incontinence

If you or someone you care for experiences bladder or bowel control problems, you are not alone. Over 4.8 million Australians experience bladder or bowel control problems. Incontinence is a huge health issue for many Australians. Involuntary leakage of urine can be embarrassing and inconvenient, limiting many people from leading fulfilling, active and social lives. It is also one of the leading reasons for admission to Aged Care facilities.

However, studies have shown that many people with urinary incontinence do not seek help from a health professional to help prevent, treat, or manage their incontinence. But some types of urinary incontinence can be very easily improved or corrected with the right treatment.

Many physiotherapists undergo specialised training to be able to correctly assess and effectively treat urinary incontinence. Treatments may include learning how to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles – the muscles that we naturally use to "hold on". Just five minutes a day of pelvic floor exercising could vastly improve your urinary leakage. Make an appointment with a trained continence physiotherapist today - it may change your life!

Article provided by Paige Shreeve, the Director of The NT Physiotherapy Clinic in Casuarina, a highly trained Women's Health physiotherapist with experience treating urinary incontinence (references to studies available). The NT Physiotherapy Clinic can be contacted on 8927 9334.