

Osteoarthritis of the knees hits women more than men due to hormones, and lifestyle - such as doing housework and wearing heels. By Cheah Ui-Hoon

WHEN it comes to the knees, women just have it worse than men. It's not just because of the hormonal disposition to osteoarthritis of the knees however, but lifestyle - such as housework and heels.



HANDLE WITH CARE

Symptoms of knee OA may include swelling and persistent pain, stiffness in the morning or even creaking sounds

'Women are more prone to osteoarthritis (OA) of the knees than men, and the ratio is eight to one. In the case of men, they tend to have suffered a knee injury, which then leads to knee OA,' says Yoon Kam Hon, consultant rheumatologist, arthritis and rheumatism specialist at El Shaddai Specialist Medical Centre.

Women who wear heels on a daily basis are at risk of developing OA in their knees, for example, while women just tend to kneel or bend down more for household chores.

Wearing high heels causes a body weight imbalance, while kneeling also puts extra weight on the knee joints, Dr Yoon explains.

Worldwide, there has been an upward trend in knee OA occurring among women. Knee OA not only affects the elderly but increasingly, women in their 40s. Recent studies from the US have also linked the overuse of heels for exceptionally long periods to joint degeneration and knee OA in women.

'The effect of wearing of heels just builds up over time, and affects those who are pre-disposed to OA as well as it aggravates. But there are those who wear heels and don't suffer,' Dr Yoon points out.

Wearing three to four inch heels for a few hours for an evening function may not have a major impact, as compared to continuous usage.

Asian women are also just more prone to knee problems, as compared to Caucasian women who are more prone to hip problems.

It's important to recognise knee OA however, as it makes up 70 per cent of the OA cases, far outnumbering OA of the hips, shoulders and wrist.

Risk for knee OA also increases to 57 per cent in those with a past knee injury. Two in three people who are obese are at risk for knee OA.

Like most other diseases, early detection and treatment will help take care of the knees, Dr Yoon points out. 'In the early stage of knee OA, supplements like glucosamine and chondroitin will be helpful; though probably not in later, advanced stages,' he says, adding that lifestyle changes such as weight loss for those who are above their ideal weight will help.

Symptoms of knee OA may include swelling and persistent pain, stiffness in the morning or even creaking sounds. 'Those who have parents with arthritis should have checks early as well, as the disease is hereditary,' Dr Yoon elaborates.

Detection of the four stages of knee OA can be done based on X-rays. The thinning of cartilage and the growth of bone spurs are usually detectable from stage two and above.

Viscosupplementation is also one of the treatments, which is the injection of fluid into the knee to lubricate and cushion the joint. In knees with osteoarthritis, the joint fluid (called synovial fluid) can break down and not provide the cushioning that your knee needs.

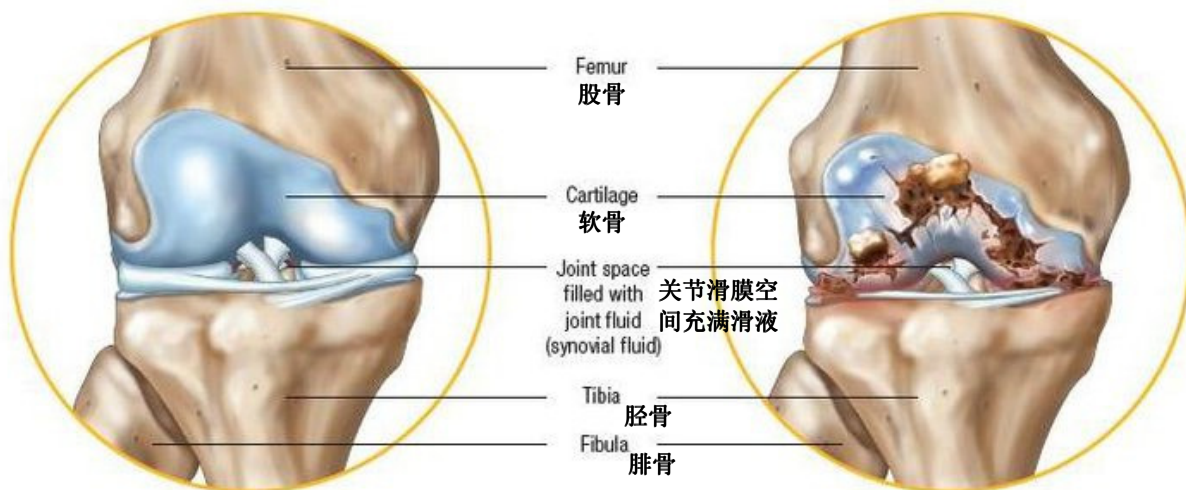
Dr Yoon, who has been administering viscosupplementation for more than 10 years, notes that the treatment can apply for all stages of knee OA. Even in the late stages of osteoarthritis (that is, 3rd and 4th stages), viscosupplementation can give 50-70 per cent relief, especially for those who are suitable for knee surgery. 'With early treatment, viscosupplementation can help relieve pain and also repair the knees.'

The injections can be administered once or in three doses, and can usually last about six months to a year, depending on the severity of the knee OA. 'However, viscosupplementation may not work for about 10 per cent of patients,' cautions Dr Yoon.

Women may be glad to know that fashion trends are also moving away from towering heels in 'aggressive footwear' which is beginning to look passe. A recent study at Northumbria University has also shown that men don't necessarily notice women in high heels. Pooh pooh that as you may, but you might just want to give your knees a fashionable break by switching to flats.

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Knee Osteoarthritis (OA) 膝骨关节炎



Healthy joint 健康关节

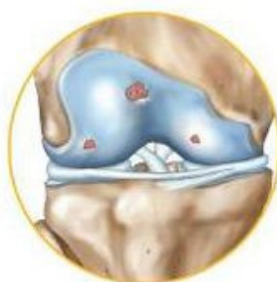
- healthy cartilage • 软骨健全
- healthy joint fluid • 滑液充足

Osteoarthritic joint 骨关节炎

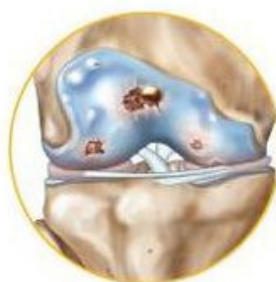
- worn out cartilage • 软骨磨损
- diminished joint fluid • 滑液减少



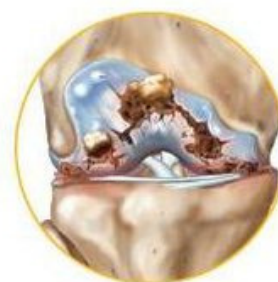
Grade 1



Grade 2



Grade 3



Grade 4

Your Knee

- Is the largest joint in your body and one of the most complex
- Is vital to movement
- Is vulnerable to injury because you use it so much
- Is injury-prone because it is made up of so many parts where things can go wrong
- Is less prone to injury if you have strong and flexible muscles
- Is more likely to last longer if you adopt the appropriate exercise regime for your age bracket
- Is placed under a four pound load reduction for every one pound of weight lost
- Is at a 50% reduced risk of OA if you are a female and lose as few as 11 pounds if you're overweight
- Is already at risk if you are a woman - Studies show 90% of females wear shoes that are too small for their feet!
- Is too important for you to hide the early signs and symptoms of OA from your doctor

The Numbers

- 70% of all OA is knee OA
- Risk for knee OA increases to 57% in those with a past knee injury
- 2 in 3 people who are obese are at risk of knee OA
- Symptoms of OA typically first begin after age 40 and progresses slowly
- After the age of 50, women are more affected by OA than men
- 80% of osteoarthritis sufferers have some degree of limitation of movement

你的膝

- 是你身上最大的关节，也是最复杂之一
- 对行动至关重要
- 很容易受到伤害，因为你经常使用它
- 很容易受到伤害，因为它是由很多部分组成，而这些部分都有可能出现问题
- 在你有强壮和灵活的肌肉时较不容易受伤
- 保持健康的可能性要提高，你就要采取适合你的年龄层的运动方式
- 所负载的重量，在你减轻体重每一磅时，减少四磅
- 骨关节炎的发病率将减低 50%，如果你是超重的女性而成功减掉 11 磅
- 只因为你是一位女性而提高患骨关节炎的几率 - 研究显示 90%的女性穿太小的鞋子！
- 太重要了，因此你不该对你的医生隐瞒骨关节炎的早期症状和体征

数据

- 70%的骨关节炎出现在膝关节
- 膝关节受过伤的人，骨关节炎发病率提高 57%
- 每三个过度肥胖者，有两个可能患膝骨关节炎
- 骨关节炎症状通常在 40 岁以后出现并缓慢恶化
- 50 岁以上，女性比男性多患骨关节炎
- 80%的骨关节炎患者，行动受到某种程度的限制

Source: KneeToKnow Facebook group

http://www.facebook.com/KneeToKnow?v=app_4949752878