Arthritis & the Elderly

There are many forms of arthritis, ranging from rheumatoid arthritis to gout and lupus; however, osteoarthritis is the most prevalent type of arthritis, particularly in adults 65 years and older.

Osteoarthritis is a chronic degenerative joint disease that frequently leads to chronic pain and disability. With the aging of our population, this condition is becoming increasingly prevalent.

Our interdisciplinary team works together to address the symptoms and needs associated with arthritis.

Therapy

Arthritis: A Team Care Approach

Physical Therapy

Goal
Maximize safe & independent mobility

Objectives
Build strength & endurance
Improve balance & coordination
Improve lower extremity joint range of motion & function
Improve transfers and ambulation
Improve safety awareness
Reduce pain that affects mobility
Manage orthotic/prosthetic and assistive device
Select appropriate wheelchair

Modalities
Superficial heat or cold
Deep heat
Electrical stimulation
Massage to reduce pain and spasm & promote stretching
Therapy for wound care
Manual techniques to improve ROM & pain reduction

Occupational Therapy

Goal
Maximize safe ADL performance & functional mobility

Objectives
Build upper extremity strength, fine motor skills Coordination & dexterity
Improve upper extremity joint range of motion
Reduce pain that affects ADL performance
Maximize visual-perceptual & cognitive skills
Maximize home and financial management
Promote safety awareness

Techniques
Encourage clothing & footwear modifications for ease of use
Use of assistive & adaptive equipment to compensate for deficits
Design & management of upper extremity orthotics to stabilize & protect painful or weak joints or to facilitate use of utensils
Energy conservation techniques
Safety awareness techniques to promote safe, independent ADLs

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Speech & Language Pathology

Goal
Improve communication & safety awareness

Objectives
Improve neurologic communication deficits
Family training

Devices
Augmentative communication to report pain
Visual cues for improved safety

Nursing

Objectives
Monitor for potential medical events
Medication monitoring
Pain management
Evaluation & management of bowel & bladder dysfunction

Activity Director

Goal
Develop or enhance activity skills

Objectives
Develop structured leisure activities that promotes socialization

Method
Group & individual activities

Social Worker

Goal
Maximize informal & formal support to enhance independence

Method
Identify and make available informal supports
Offer resources
Provide education, support & counseling

Nutrition

Social Services