

# Ankle osteoarthritis

## Information for patients

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### What is ankle osteoarthritis?

Ankle osteoarthritis is arthritic or worsening changes within the ankle joint.

### What are the causes/risk factors?

- The most common cause is attributed to previous trauma or injury to your ankle (examples of trauma may include sprains or fractures)
- Obesity
- Inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis.



### What are the symptoms?

- Pain over your ankle
- Ankle swelling and stiffness
- Pain when bearing weight
- Changes in the way you walk because of the pain.

### How is it diagnosed?

An appropriate healthcare professional will discuss your foot symptoms and enquire about your general health. A physical examination of your foot will be carried out to assess your movement, response to particular tests and level of pain. An x-ray is sometimes required to confirm the clinical diagnosis.

### What is the management for ankle osteoarthritis?

Many patients are happy to self-manage their symptoms with painkillers/anti-inflammatory medication or other non-invasive treatments, such as:

- Lifestyle and health changes
- Changes to your activity
- Podiatry/physiotherapy

### Lifestyle and health changes

The following adjustments to your lifestyle can help to manage ankle osteoarthritis:

- Maintaining a healthy diet and weight
- Getting 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night

- Reducing your alcohol intake
- Quit smoking.

Not all of these recommendations may be relevant to you, but these are important factors to consider to optimise your outcome.

Further information and support can be found at <https://nhsinform.scot/healthy-living>

## How can I manage it?

- Rest/immobilisation/changes to your activity as required
- Self directed exercises
- Pain relief or anti-inflammatory medication
  - Speak to your GP or pharmacist.

## Podiatry/physiotherapy

Through a thorough examination, a podiatrist or a physiotherapist can:

- Help you establish what may be causing your pain
- Provide you with a personal treatment plan to help and/or resolve symptoms
- Arrange further investigation, if required
- Treatments provided include:
  - Exercises
  - Advice on footwear and changes to your activity
  - Footwear adaptations/insoles or ankle braces.

## More invasive management options:

In some cases the symptoms may persist and more invasive treatments may be required/requested by you, as the patient:

- **Corticosteroid injection:** A steroid injection can be carried out depending on certain factors:
  - The severity of your osteoarthritis
  - Your current medications.
- **Surgery:** Surgery is only required if pain is present and symptoms are unable to be controlled by the methods described above.