

# Understanding Arthritis

## Know What Arthritis Is

- Arthritis: “arth = joint; “itis” = inflammation
- #1 cause of disability in the United States
- 43 million or 1 in 5 Americans have doctor-diagnosed arthritis
- Common types of arthritis:
  - Osteoarthritis (21 million) – breakdown of the cushioning tissue, called cartilage, in the joints. This is the most common form of arthritis. It affects the weight-bearing joints of the knees, hips and lower back as well as the hands.
  - Rheumatoid Arthritis (2.1 million) - causes inflammation of the lining of joint tissue, leading to deformity.
  - Juvenile Arthritis (300,000) - produces serious complications in severe cases or causes few problems in very mild cases.
  - Fibromyalgia - pain syndrome involving muscles and muscle attachment areas.
  - Gout - rheumatic disease causing sudden, severe episodes of pain and tenderness, redness, warmth and swelling in the joints.
  - Lupus - affects the skin and body tissues and possibly organs such as kidneys, lungs or heart.



## Know the Warning Signs of Arthritis



If you have any of the following symptoms, see your doctor:

- Swelling in one or more joints.
- Morning stiffness lasting 30 minutes or longer.
- Persistent joint pain or tenderness.
- Inability to move a joint in the normal way.
- Weight loss, fever or weakness, and joint pain that cannot be explained.

Visit [www.utextension.tennessee.edu/knox](http://www.utextension.tennessee.edu/knox) for more information.