

Disorders of the Joints

There are three types of joints in our body: *fibrous* or fixed joints, *cartilaginous* or slightly movable joints and *synovial* or freely movable joints. The most susceptible to disease are the joints of the hands, feet, knees, shoulders, elbows and hips. The most commonly found diseases include *rheumatoid arthritis*, *osteoarthritis* and *gout*.

Most people with rheumatoid arthritis have a long history of intestinal complaints: *bloatedness*, *flatulence*, *heartburn*, *belching*, *constipation*, *diarrhea*, *coldness and swelling of hands and feet*, *increased perspiration*, *general fatigue*, *loss of appetite*, *weight reduction*, etc. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that rheumatoid arthritis is linked with any of these, or similar symptoms of major intestinal and metabolic difficulties.

The gastro-intestinal tract is constantly exposed to a large number of viruses, bacteria and parasites. In addition to the many antigens (foreign material) contained in foods, the digestive system may also have to deal with insecticides, pesticides, hormones, antibiotic residues, preservatives and colorings contained in so many foodstuffs today. Other possible *antigens* include pollen from flowers, plants, plant antibodies, fungi, bacteria and some large molecule drugs, such as penicillin. It is the task of the immune system, most of which is located in the intestinal wall, to protect us against all of these potentially harmful invaders and substances. To be able to accomplish this task on a daily basis, both the digestive and lymphatic systems must remain unobstructed and efficient. Gallstones in the liver seriously disturb the digestive process, which leads to an overload of toxic substances in the blood and lymph, as mentioned above (see *Disorders of the Circulatory System*).

Arthritis is considered to be an *auto-immune disease* affecting the synovial membrane. Auto-immunity, a condition in which the immune system develops immunity to its own cells, results when antigen/antibody complexes (*rheumatoid factors*) are formed and present in the blood. Naturally, the B-lymphocytes (immune cells) in the intestinal wall become stimulated and produce antibodies (*immunoglobulin's*) when coming into contact with these antigens. The immune cells circulate in the blood and some settle in the lymph nodes, spleen, mucous membrane of the salivary glands, lymphatic system of the bronchial tubes, vagina or uterus, milk-producing mammary glands of the breasts and capsular tissues of the joints.

If there is repeated exposure to the same types of toxic antigens, antibody production will increase dramatically, particularly in areas where immune cells have settled due to a previous encounter with the invaders. These harmful antigens may consist of protein particles from putrefying animal foods, for example. In such a case, there can be intense microbial activity. The new encounter with the antigens raises the level of antigen/antibody complexes in the blood and upsets the fine balance that exists between the immune reaction and its suppression. Auto-immune diseases, which indicate an extremely high level of toxicity in the body, directly result from a disturbance of this balance. If antibody production is continually high in synovial joints, inflammation becomes chronic, leading to increasing deformity, pain and loss of function. The overuse of the immune system leads to *self-destruction* in the body. If this form of self-destruction occurs in nerve tissue, it is called MS, and if it occurs in organ tissue, it is called cancer. Yet, seen from a deeper perspective, the self-destruction is but a final attempt at self-preservation. The body only attacks itself if the toxicity could cause more damage than an auto-immune response would. Gallstones in the liver are the leading cause of toxicity. They can paralyze the body's ability to keep itself nourished and clean.

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative non-inflammatory disease. It occurs when the renewal of *articular cartilage* (a smooth, strong surface, covering bones that are in contact with other bones) does not keep pace with its removal. The articular cartilage gradually becomes thinner until, eventually, the bony articular surfaces come into contact and the bones begin to degenerate. Abnormal bone repair and chronic inflammation may follow this form of injury. This disease is also caused by long-standing digestive disorder. As fewer nutrients are absorbed and distributed for tissue building, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain healthy sustenance of bone and articular cartilage.

Gallstones in the liver impair the basic digestive processes and, therefore, play perhaps the most important role in the development of osteoarthritis.

Gout, which is another joint disease directly connected to weak liver performance, is caused by *sodium urate crystals* in joints and tendons. Gout occurs in some people whose *blood uric acid* is abnormally high. When gallstones in the liver begin to affect blood circulation in the kidneys (see *Urinary Disorders*), uric acid excretion becomes inefficient. This also causes increased cell damage and cell destruction in the liver and kidneys, as well as in other parts of the body.

Uric acid is a waste product of the breakdown of cell nuclei and is produced in excess with increased cell destruction. Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcoholic beverages regularly, using stimulants, etc., cause marked cell destruction which releases large quantities of degenerate cell protein into the blood stream. In addition, uric acid production rises sharply with over-consumption of protein foods, such as meat, fish, eggs, cheese, etc. Incidentally, all of the aforementioned foods and substances lead to gallstone formation in the liver and gallbladder. There may be several acute attacks of arthritis before damage of joints decreases mobility and the gout condition becomes chronic.