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# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

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## Guideline scope

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### Osteoarthritis: care and management

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This guideline will update the NICE guideline on [osteoarthritis: care and management](#) (CG177).

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The guideline will be developed using the methods and processes outlined in [developing NICE guidelines: the manual](#).

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This guideline will also be used to update the NICE [quality standard](#) for osteoarthritis.

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#### **1 Why the guideline is needed**

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New evidence that could affect recommendations was identified through the surveillance process. Topic experts, including those who helped to develop the existing guideline, advised NICE on whether areas should be updated or new areas added. Full details are set out in the [surveillance review decision](#).

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#### **Key facts and figures**

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Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It typically presents with joint symptoms such as pain and stiffness, mostly affecting the knee, hip, hand and foot joints. Symptoms vary from mild and intermittent, to more persistent or severe. The condition does not inevitably get worse, but symptoms fluctuate and flare-ups are common.

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Osteoarthritis is more common in women, people living in deprived areas, people aged 45 and over and people who are obese. The prevalence of osteoarthritis continues to increase.

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1 Osteoarthritis has a negative impact on daily activities, quality of life and  
2 health outcomes. In 2016, musculoskeletal conditions, including osteoarthritis,  
3 resulted in 30.8 million lost working days in the UK. The additional cost of  
4 living for people with osteoarthritis was estimated to be £480 per year in 2012.  
5 This included costs for extra heating, travel, parking, prescriptions and  
6 adjustments to the home. In the UK approximately 8.75 million people aged  
7 45 years or more have sought treatment for osteoarthritis. In 2018 there were  
8 over 65,000 hip and 65,000 knee replacements undertaken in the NHS,  
9 mostly for osteoarthritis. Many people with osteoarthritis have multimorbidity,  
10 which can increase the complexity of their care.

11 Osteoarthritis may prevent people managing their other health problems  
12 properly. This could be because limitations on their activity can affect self-  
13 management (for example from the dexterity needed to take tablets through to  
14 undertaking aerobic exercise) or their ability to seek support from a healthcare  
15 professional (for example because of difficulty mobilising). Or it could be  
16 because of the negative impact of pain on their mood and motivation.

### 17 **Current practice**

18 GPs are a common first point of contact for people with osteoarthritis. But  
19 although some people may re-present to their GP over many years, some  
20 only present once and others never present. This may be because of common  
21 myths – for example, that nothing can be done or that joint pain is part of  
22 normal ageing.

23 A range of non-pharmacological, pharmacological and surgical interventions  
24 can reduce joint pain and improve function. But these interventions are not  
25 used consistently and healthcare professionals often do not see osteoarthritis  
26 as a clinical priority.

27 Although joint replacement surgery can be highly effective, not everyone  
28 needs it, and it remains unclear who will benefit the most from it. In addition,  
29 there is uncertainty about whether treatment for an osteoarthritis flare-up  
30 should be different to treatment for ongoing symptoms.

1 An increasing breadth of multidisciplinary professionals provide care for  
2 people with osteoarthritis. All need to be equipped to deliver high-quality and  
3 cost-effective care across the care pathway.

#### 4 **Policy, legislation, regulation and commissioning**

5 NHS England has developed a plan to improve outcomes for people with  
6 [musculoskeletal conditions](#) as part of its work on long-term conditions.

## 7 **2 Who the guideline is for**

8 This guideline is for:

- 9 • healthcare professionals providing NHS-commissioned services.
- 10 • commissioners of health and social care services.
- 11 • people using services, their families and carers, and the public.

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13 It may also be relevant for:

- 14 • private healthcare providers, including physiotherapy and care homes.

15 NICE guidelines cover health and care in England. Decisions on how they  
16 apply in other UK countries are made by ministers in the [Welsh Government](#),  
17 [Scottish Government](#) and [Northern Ireland Executive](#).

### 18 ***Equality considerations***

19 NICE has carried out [an equality impact assessment](#) during scoping. The  
20 assessment:

- 21 • lists equality issues identified, and how they have been addressed
- 22 • explains why any groups are excluded from the scope.

## 1    **3            What the guideline will cover**

### 2    **3.1            *Who is the focus?***

#### 3    **Groups that will be covered**

- 4    • Adults aged 16 years and over with osteoarthritis or suspected
- 5    osteoarthritis

6    No specific subgroups of people have been identified as needing specific  
7    consideration.

#### 8    **Groups that will not be covered**

- 9    • People with conditions that may make them susceptible to osteoarthritis or
- 10    often occur alongside osteoarthritis, including:
  - 11    – crystal arthritis (gout or pseudo-gout)
  - 12    – inflammatory arthritis (including rheumatoid arthritis and psoriatic
  - 13    arthritis)
  - 14    – septic arthritis (an infection in the joint)
  - 15    – diseases of childhood that pre-dispose a person to osteoarthritis
  - 16    – medical conditions presenting with joint inflammation, such as
  - 17    haemochromatosis (a build-up of iron levels in the body)
  - 18    – malignancy.

### 19   **3.2            *Settings***

#### 20   **Settings that will be covered**

- 21   • All settings where NHS healthcare is provided or commissioned.

### 22   **3.3            *Activities, services or aspects of care***

#### 23   **Key areas that will be covered**

24   We will look at evidence in the areas below when developing the guideline,  
25   but it may not be possible to make recommendations in all the areas.

26   1    Assessment and diagnosis

27   2    Information for people with osteoarthritis, their family and carers

- 1 3 Non-pharmacological management, such as:
  - 2 – exercise therapy
  - 3 – weight loss
  - 4 – education
  - 5 – osteoarthritis programmes
  - 6 – electrotherapy
  - 7 – aids and devices (including mobility aids)
- 8 4 Pharmacological management, such as:
  - 9 – oral medications
  - 10 – topical agents
  - 11 – intra-articular injections (injections in the space between two bones of
  - 12 a joint)
- 13 5 Follow-up and review
- 14 6 Arthroscopic procedures (minimally invasive surgery of the joint)
- 15 7 Referral for joint replacement surgery

16 Note that guideline recommendations for medicines will normally fall within  
17 licensed indications; exceptionally, and only if clearly supported by evidence,  
18 use outside a licensed indication may be recommended. The guideline will  
19 assume that prescribers will use a medicine's summary of product  
20 characteristics to inform decisions made with individual patients.

#### 21 **Areas that will not be covered**

- 22 1 Joint replacement surgery
- 23 2 Stand-alone psychological interventions (unless part of an osteoarthritis  
24 programme)
- 25 3 Nutritional supplements
- 26 4 Thermotherapy
- 27 5 Manual therapy
- 28 6 Acupuncture

## 1 **Related NICE guidance**

### 2 ***Published***

- 3 • [Platelet-rich plasma injections for knee osteoarthritis](#) (2019) NICE  
4 interventional procedures guidance IPG637
- 5 • [Total distal radioulnar joint replacement for symptomatic joint instability or](#)  
6 [arthritis](#) (2017) NICE interventional procedures guidance IPG595
- 7 • [Joint distraction for ankle osteoarthritis](#) (2015) NICE interventional  
8 procedures guidance IPG538
- 9 • [Joint distraction for knee osteoarthritis without alignment correction](#) (2015)  
10 NICE interventional procedures guidance IPG529
- 11 • [Implantation of a shock or load absorber for mild to moderate symptomatic](#)  
12 [medial knee osteoarthritis](#) (2015) NICE interventional procedures guidance  
13 IPG512
- 14 • [Total hip replacement and resurfacing arthroplasty for end-stage arthritis of](#)  
15 [the hip](#) (2014) NICE technology appraisal guidance TA304
- 16 • [Weight management: lifestyle services for overweight or obese adults](#)  
17 (2014) NICE guideline PH53
- 18 • [Shoulder resurfacing arthroplasty](#) (2010) NICE interventional procedures  
19 guidance IPG354
- 20 • [Depression in adults with a chronic physical health problem: recognition](#)  
21 [and management](#) (2009) NICE guideline CG91
- 22 • [Individually magnetic resonance imaging-designed unicompartamental](#)  
23 [interpositional implant insertion for osteoarthritis of the knee](#) (2009) NICE  
24 interventional procedures guidance IPG317
- 25 • [Total wrist replacement](#) (2008) NICE interventional procedures guidance  
26 IPG271
- 27 • [Arthroscopic knee washout, with or without debridement, for the treatment](#)  
28 [of osteoarthritis](#) (2007) NICE interventional procedures guidance IPG230
- 29 • [Metatarsophalangeal joint replacement of the hallux](#) (2005) NICE  
30 interventional procedures guidance IPG140
- 31 • [Artificial trapeziometacarpal joint replacement for end-stage osteoarthritis](#)  
32 (2005) NICE interventional procedures guidance IPG111

- 1 • [Artificial metacarpophalangeal and interphalangeal joint replacement for](#)  
2 [end-stage arthritis](#) (2005) NICE interventional procedures guidance IPG110

### 3 ***In development***

- 4 • [Midcarpal hemiarthroplasty for wrist arthritis](#). NICE interventional  
5 procedures guidance. Publication date to be confirmed.  
6 • [Chronic pain: assessment and management](#). NICE guideline. Publication  
7 expected August 2020  
8 • [Joint replacement \(primary\): hip, knee and shoulder](#). NICE guideline.  
9 Publication expected March 2020

### 10 **NICE guidance about the experience of people using NHS services**

11 NICE has produced the following guidance on the experience of people using  
12 the NHS. This guideline will not include additional recommendations on these  
13 topics unless there are specific issues related to osteoarthritis:

- 14 • [Medicines optimisation](#) (2015) NICE guideline NG5  
15 • [Patient experience in adult NHS services](#) (2012) NICE guideline CG138  
16 • [Medicines adherence](#) (2009) NICE guideline CG76

### 17 **3.4 *Economic aspects***

18 We will take economic aspects into account when making recommendations.  
19 We will develop an economic plan that states for each review question (or key  
20 area in the scope) whether economic considerations are relevant, and if so  
21 whether this is an area that should be prioritised for economic modelling and  
22 analysis. We will review the economic evidence and carry out economic  
23 analyses, using an NHS and personal social services (PSS) perspective, as  
24 appropriate.

### 25 **3.5 *Key issues and draft questions***

26 While writing the scope, we have identified the following key issues and draft  
27 questions related to them:

- 28 1 Assessment and diagnosis

- 1 1.1 What is the additional benefit of imaging in the diagnosis of
- 2 osteoarthritis in people with suspected osteoarthritis?
- 3 2 Information for people with osteoarthritis, their family and carers
- 4 2.1 What information on osteoarthritis, including the management of
- 5 flare-ups, do people with osteoarthritis, their family and carers need after
- 6 diagnosis?
- 7 3 Non-pharmacological management
- 8 3.1 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of exercise, weight loss
- 9 and education alone or in combination (osteoarthritis programmes) for
- 10 the management of osteoarthritis?
- 11 3.2 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of electrotherapy for the
- 12 management of osteoarthritis?
- 13 3.3 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of aids and devices
- 14 (including mobility aids) for the management of osteoarthritis?
- 15 4 Pharmacological management
- 16 4.1 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of oral pharmacological
- 17 interventions for the management of osteoarthritis?
- 18 4.2 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of topical agents for the
- 19 management of osteoarthritis?
- 20 4.3 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of intra-articular injections
- 21 with corticosteroids or hyaluronic acid for the management of
- 22 osteoarthritis?
- 23 5 Follow-up and review
- 24 5.1 What follow-up and review is needed for people with osteoarthritis?
- 25 5.2 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of X-ray or MRI during the
- 26 management of osteoarthritis (for example, in the management of flares
- 27 or before consideration for referral to surgery)?
- 28 6 Arthroscopic procedures
- 29 6.1 What is the clinical and cost effectiveness of arthroscopic procedures
- 30 for the management of osteoarthritis?
- 31 7 Referral for joint replacement surgery
- 32 7.1 What factors indicate the need for referral for possible joint
- 33 replacement surgery in people with osteoarthritis?

1 7.2 Are patient factors (for example, BMI, age) associated with increased  
2 benefits or harms after joint replacement surgery in people with  
3 osteoarthritis?

4 The key issues and draft questions will be used to develop more detailed  
5 review questions, which guide the systematic review of the literature.

### 6 **3.6 Main outcomes**

7 The main outcomes that may be considered when searching for and  
8 assessing the evidence are:

- 9 • health-related quality of life
- 10 • physical function
- 11 • pain
- 12 • osteoarthritis flare-ups
- 13 • psychological distress
- 14 • adverse events.

## 15 **4 NICE quality standards and NICE Pathways**

### 16 **4.1 NICE quality standards**

17 **NICE quality standards that may need to be revised or updated when**  
18 **this guideline is published**

- 19 • Osteoarthritis (2015) NICE quality standard QS87

### 20 **4.2 NICE Pathways**

21 When this guideline is published, we will update the existing NICE Pathway on  
22 [osteoarthritis](#). NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE has said on a  
23 topic in an interactive flowchart.

## 24 **5 Further information**

This is the draft scope for consultation with registered stakeholders. The consultation dates are 1 May to 31 May 2019.

The guideline is expected to be published in August 2021.

You can follow progress of the [guideline](#).

Our website has information about how [NICE guidelines](#) are developed.

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