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## ARTHRITIS ON THE RISE Aging joints at risk for 'wear and tear' of osteoarthritis

Arthritis is the most frequent chronic condition and cause of activity limitation in patients 65 and older and is becoming more prevalent as the population ages.

"Osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis, occurs when cartilage within the joint breaks down from wear and tear," said Kurt Unverferth, M.D., a Center surgeon specializing in total joint replacement of the knees and hips. "One-third of the population, or at least 40 million Americans by the year 2020, will experience some form of osteoarthritis by age 65."

Men commonly experience the onset of arthritis before age 50, while women's symptoms usually surface after 50. Early signs of arthritis include pain, stiffness and difficulty moving the knees, hips or shoulders. As arthritis progresses, these symptoms may begin to interfere with everyday activities.

Risk factors include: family history, obesity, prior injuries to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) of the knee and occupations requiring regularly lifting and moving heavy objects.

Arthritis can be diagnosed through physical examination and X-rays. The good news: early interventions can relieve pain, strengthen muscles and delay further progression of the disease.

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For more information about common arthritis conditions and treatments, contact an Ohio Joint Replacement Institute physician at 614.827.8700 and visit the Center's Web site at [www.ohio-ortho.com](http://www.ohio-ortho.com).