

Frequently asked Questions

What if I can't manage to complete the exercise session?

Throughout the programme you will be with the same exercise specialist whenever possible. They will work with you to make sure you start exercising at a suitable level for yourself and progress gradually throughout the course. The group will be given a basic set of exercises at each session but these can always be adapted to suit all abilities.

Should I stop attending if my knee is very painful?

If you have not exercised for some time, you can sometimes get a worsening of pain in your joints. This usually improves by week 4 of starting the programme, and by week 6 you can expect to see a significant improvement in your joint pain.

If you are experiencing increasing pain levels you should let your exercise instructor know, and they will be able to provide you with some suggestions of how to control your pain such as the use of cold packs. If your pain cannot be controlled with simple measures you may also need to increase the number of pain killers you take initially, and we would encourage you to discuss this with your GP.

Will I have to go on a diet?

No. The Food Wise for Life programme will provide you with the knowledge to make healthy nutritious food choices.

The cookery sessions will also demonstrate how healthy meals can be created quickly and at a low cost.

For more information you can call the programme coordinator:

Merthyr - 01685 727 442
RCT - 01443 562 202 Ext: 20527



Joint Care Programme

Information for Patients

Osteoarthritis is a condition that causes the joints to become painful and stiff. It is the most common form of arthritis in the UK. Being overweight or obese is a key risk factor for developing knee and hip osteoarthritis and can also make your symptoms worse. Osteoarthritis is a long term condition, but many individuals can help manage their symptoms by maintaining a healthy weight and undertaking regular exercise.



The Joint Care Programme is a 12 week, community based programme targeted at patients who are overweight and have chronic knee and/or hip pain. The programme will support them to lose weight, increase activity levels and improve their overall health and well being.



What are the benefits of attending?

Changing your lifestyle can be a challenge. This programme provides support for you to improve your diet and increase activity which in turn will:-

- Reduce joint pain
- Help you to reach a healthy weight
- Increase mobility
- Improve overall health and wellbeing
- Possibly reduce or delay the need for surgery

Group sessions can help with motivation and give you goals to work towards. Comments from past patients include:-

“Really enjoyed it! I made new friends, had a laugh while we learned new things. The tutors were excellent.”

“Very good! I'm motivated to do more exercise.”



The best results are seen in patients who attend the programme regularly for the full 12 weeks.



How can I join the programme?

Ask your GP, nurse or physiotherapist about whether this programme would be suitable for you.

What happens next?

Once they receive your referral, the exercise referral team will contact you to explain more about the programme and invite you to attend for a first assessment.

The assessment will involve answering questions about yourself, your health and your activity levels, including measurements like your weight, height and blood pressure and doing some light exercises to assess how your osteoarthritis is affecting your mobility. You will then be offered a place on the next available programme.

What does the Joint Care Programme involve?

The Joint Care Programme is a 12 week programme run by exercise specialists in local leisure centres. Currently it is available at Merthyr Leisure Centre, Rhondda Leisure Centre, the Michael Sobell Centre in Aberdare and Llantrisant Leisure Centre.

Evening provision is also available.

The programme offers a **two hour weekly session** consisting of **1 hour of light exercise** and **1 hour of nutrition advice**, including some practical cookery sessions.

This session is free of charge, although second, exercise only session run by the NERS team may be available within the leisure centre each week at a small cost.

What happens when I complete the Programme?

You will undergo a further assessment in the last week to see how well you have progressed. The report from this assessment will, with your permission, be shared with your GP.

The exercise professionals will plan with you how you can continue being more active and discuss what is available locally to help support this. For example if you would like to join in other leisure classes, swimming or walking groups, information will be provided.

