

What to do on Stiff Days

The symptoms of arthritis can improve and worsen from day to day. It can improve dramatically and your child can be sailing along without difficulty and all of a sudden symptoms return. Or the return of symptoms can be subtle in creeping up on your child. This can happen at any time but some things that may factor into a flare are an infection, a change in the weather or a growth spurt which might require a change in their medications. When the symptoms of arthritis return or worsen after improvement we call this a flare.

So if you find your child is in a flare what can you do?

1. **HEAT:** Put heat on the affected joint for twenty minutes. You can accomplish this by taking a hot bath, using a grain bag heated in the microwave or an electric heating pad (Not in bed, fire hazard) or the stick-on disposable thera-pack available at the drug store.
2. **PAIN MEDICINE:** Take the correct dose of Tylenol every 4-6 hours. Call the office if you do not know the correct dose.
3. **MOVE AROUND:** The more your child sits or lies in one place the stiffer they will become. We want the kids at school if at all possible because it gives them a reason to be moving around and is a great distraction giving them something else to think about. Focused stretching of all muscles above and below the affected joint or joints helps decrease pain and stiffness.

If your child is ill for more than a few days or with a fever greater than 101 degrees, have them seen by their pediatrician to make sure they don't have an infection that needs to be treated.

Flares in the symptoms of arthritis may only last a few days. Call our office if your child has any of the following:

1. Pain or stiffness lasting 2 weeks or more
2. A red hot joint with fever
3. Is unable to bare weight on a joint effected with arthritis
4. Is unable to keep down their medications.

During office hours call 816-234-1666