



# PROTECTING YOUR JOINTS

**Making lifestyle changes when necessary can help manage joint pain and protect your joints as you age.**

Some of these changes are small and easy to accomplish, while others are more difficult. But changing your habits can help you age in a healthier manner.

## Quit Smoking

Smoking increases inflammation that leads to arthritis. If you smoke, consider quitting. ConnectCare3's Tobacco Cessation program can assist you in achieving your quit goals.

## Stay Hydrated

Cartilage, which cushions your joints, is 80 percent water. When dehydrated, the body can pull water from cartilage, which leads to joint inflammation and potential joint problems.

## Manage Your Weight

Carrying just 10 pounds of extra weight adds 20 to 39 pounds of force on each knee with every step, according to experts. If you need help managing your weight, ConnectCare3's Chronic Disease Management & Prevention team can assist you.

## Muscle Strength

You need sufficient muscle around your joints to keep them strong and stable. Building up those muscles can help alleviate stress on your joints.

## Balanced Diet

Consuming a wide variety of nutritious foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, low-fat dairy, and healthy fats may help to reduce inflammation in the body and promote optimal joint health.

Work with a ConnectCare3 registered dietitian to create a customized meal plan that works with your lifestyle needs.

Cleveland Clinic. "5 Best Ways to Safeguard Your Joints as You Age"  
Accessed at <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/5-best-ways-to-safeguard-your-joints-as-you-age/>