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THE RICE DIET AND ARTHRITIS

Arthritis (inflammation of the joints) is a common, often painful, sometimes incapacitating group of illnesses. It affects joints with one or more of the following conditions: redness, heat, pain, swelling or stiffness. In many cases, the treatment with the rice diet improves arthritis in these ways:

Reduces swelling: Fluid retention from almost any cause can be decreased by sodium reduction. Decreases in swelling can also be an important factor in reducing pain.

Decreases mechanical strain by reducing the weight load the joints must bear.

Increases oxygen inflow to affected joints. Local heat, long used to treat arthritis, achieves its effect by increasing local blood flow. The Rice Diet does this by improving the condition of the blood vessels, by increasing the oxygen tension (oxygen concentration) in the blood going to the joints, and by cutting down the unnecessary fat which wastes circulation.

One of the most familiar and most common types of arthritis is *osteoarthritis*, or degenerative joint disease, which usually develops in the back, hips, knees and fingers. It is seen frequently in older persons, but may occur at an early age in overweight individuals, even starting in early teen-age.

Rheumatoid or inflammatory arthritis may occur from childhood to old age, usually as an acute illness with fever, weight loss, malaise, and of course painful, often hot, swollen, stiff joints. Deformities of the joints frequently develop in time.

Gout is a specific, usually acute, extremely painful type of arthritis, often familial. It is frequently, but not always, limited to one joint, the big toe being a favorite site. It is often associated with a high uric acid concentration in the serum and uric acid crystals in the joints. However, many individuals who have a high uric acid concentration may never develop the characteristic symptoms of gout: arthritis, tophi (uric acid deposits in the skin, the outer ear being a preferred location), and/or kidney stones. While uric acid concentra-

tion in the serum often increases temporarily during early weeks of rapid weight loss, attacks of gout as a result of this are rare, although not unheard of.

The collagen or connective tissue diseases (rheumatic fever, lupus erythematosus, etc.), hepatitis, colitis and psoriasis all may have joint symptoms as one of the manifestations of their disease processes.

Here are examples of Rice Diet treatment in three of these arthritis categories:

Osteoarthritis

Mrs. E. S. (age 63) came to Durham early in 1980 weighing 259 pounds (height, 5'1"). Two years previously she had fallen with her full weight on both knees, injuring the cartilage, and subsequently developed severe arthritis which kept her in constant pain in spite of medication. Her mobility was limited to walking from room to room within her house. She could not rise from a chair without help. On one occasion she was unable to get out of a bathtub for three hours. During her first week in Durham, her blood pressure averaged 164/93. Her blood chemistry, including the uric acid, was essentially normal.

For approximately a year, E. S. stayed in Durham and conscientiously followed the Rice Diet and a gradually increasing program of exercises. Her weight decreased from 259 to 125 pounds; her blood pressure averaged 114/74. The pain disappeared; she walked eight to ten miles daily, could stand still indefinitely, and bathe in a tub at will. She took no medication after the first month of treatment here.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

One of Dr. Kempner's earlier diet patients, Mrs. M. G., came to Durham in 1947 at the age of 51 with a 30 year history of rheumatoid arthritis. Pain was most severe in the right knee, left great toe and both wrists. She had marked deformity and motion limitation at these joints and at the elbows. When her arthritis flared up on numerous occasions, she had to use crutches.

Before coming to Durham M. G. had had an unusual variety of treatments, including extraction of teeth, tonsillectomy and

