

## Description of the Patient Education Program (PEP)

All patients must register in advance to attend Education classes.  
To register, e-mail: [alice.soo@vch.ca](mailto:alice.soo@vch.ca) OR call: 604-875-4021

### 1. Introduction & Patient's Perspective

This class has the objectives of (1) motivating patients to become actively involved in their health care decisions and healthy lifestyle choices, and (2) to introduce them to the various classes available that will assist them with this process. A volunteer from The Arthritis Society explains their own story and the benefits they have experienced from self-management activities. A health care professional then provides information about the other classes and helps participants decide which classes are appropriate for them.

### 2. Managing Pain - What can I do to feel better?

Designed for people with arthritis. Participants will learn the causes of pain and how they relate to the arthritis disease process. Factors that may contribute to their pain experience will be included. Participants will learn skills to better help them manage their pain. A variety of educational resources on pain management will also be provided. This class will not discuss pharmacological management of pain.

### 3. Understanding Exercise - What types of exercise do I need?

How can you exercise when joints hurt? Participants will learn about different types of exercise as well as benefits and barriers for these types of exercises. Strategies for overcoming barriers will be discussed. Participants will learn how to judge if they are doing the right amount of exercise. A variety of community exercise resources will be introduced.

### 4. Managing Fatigue - How can I save my energy?

Fatigue can be a daily experience for people with arthritis. Learn about the relationship of fatigue to other symptoms of arthritis and how it can affect your life. Learn how to plan and pace yourself, set priorities, and position yourself and your surroundings to make best use of the energy you have. Strategies for getting a good night sleep will be discussed, from good sleep routines to the best mattress for you.

### 5. Healthy Eating & Weight Management - How can I fit this into my life?

These 6 sessions are designed for people interested in the basic concepts of healthy eating and are interested in losing weight or maintaining their current weight. In this session, clients will review the Canada's Food Guide, food portions and distribution, ways to increase omega-3's, calcium, folic acid, and fluids in diet. Consideration of what foods to eat when feeling unwell and the pros and cons of current weight management programs/strategies will be discussed.

### 6. Managing Activities (Arms/Hands) - How do I get things done when my arms and hands hurt?

If you find you have problems doing the things you need or like to do because of pain or loss of movement in your hands, elbows, or shoulders, this class can help. You will learn how to problem solve ways to do things that will put less stress on your joints, be less painful, and help you get things done. Learn about equipment, tools, or splints that may help protect your joints and share what you have found to be helpful with others.

### 7. Managing Activities (Legs/Feet) - How do I get things done when my feet and legs hurt?

If you have trouble moving around or doing the things you need or like to do because of pain or loss of movement in your feet, knees, or hips, this class can help. Learn simple ways of doing things that will put less stress on your joints, be less painful, and let you get things done. Learn about how good footwear can help; equipment that can make a difference in doing things; when a knee brace or foot orthotic might work for you.

### 8. Complementary Therapies - What works? What's safe?

These 6 sessions are designed for people living with arthritis who have questions about complementary therapies such as herbal/dietary supplements, techniques such relaxation, visualization and meditation, and treatments such as acupuncture and energy healing. Clients will review how to research complementary therapies and make informed choices; how to evaluate safety and effectiveness of therapies, and understand some of the more common therapies used for managing arthritis.

### 9. Preventing and Managing Osteoporosis - What do I need to know?

This class is designed for people who have osteoporosis secondary to arthritis, those at risk for developing osteoporosis, and those who would like to learn about the prevention and management of osteoporosis. Specific exercises for osteoporosis will also be included.

## **10. Career & Work Options - What do I need to know?**

Job & Career Exploration: This session is designed for people with arthritis who are currently working and also for those people wanting to re-enter the work force. Topics include “To tell or not tell the Boss”, adapting jobs, and career exploration. Participation will be required in 2 self-assessment exercises on interests and values. Internet resources and government funded programs for further career exploration and labour market information will also be provided.

## **11. Managing Inflammatory Arthritis - What is inflammatory arthritis and how can I deal with it?**

These 3 sessions are designed for people with inflammatory arthritis, such as JRA, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, and poly-inflammatory arthritis. In this session, clients will review the meaning of inflammatory arthritis and joint inflammation, how the disease is diagnosed, and the risk of complications. Review new approaches to medication management and the role of NSAIDs (anti-inflammatory medications), cortisone therapy, DMARDs (disease modifying drugs), biologics, and medications currently being researched. They will learn the meaning of laboratory tests, and the goals of arthritis management. Learn the purpose of a body scan and how to perform one on themselves. Clients will understand the meaning of a “flare” and how to manage it. They will also learn the differences between physical activity and therapeutic exercise. By the end of the class they will know how to assess when their joints are “active” and which activities to perform at the different stages of disease activity. Case studies will be provided for problem solving.

## **12. Managing Osteoarthritis - What is osteoarthritis and how can I deal with it?**

This class is designed for people with osteoarthritis. By the end of the session you will know the meaning of osteoarthritis, learn skills for management, and understand the use of medications for osteoarthritis.

## **13. ‘Introduction to Relaxation & Meditation’ by Lela Billows, community practitioner**

Relaxation and mediation are useful in reducing stress and in helping to manage pain. This course will introduce you to a variety of methods for relaxing, as taught by Lela Billows, who has previously led sessions through the Vancouver School Board and the YWCA.

## **14. Community Resources - Financial and other benefits available to someone living with a disability**

This class is suitable for any type of arthritis. During the session we will be covering such topics as: what are the different types of subsidized housing and how does one apply, what disability pensions are there for someone who is no longer able to work, and what are the different ways of saving money when living on a limited income. This session will be adapted to the needs of those who are attending. All participants will leave with a manual of community resources.

## **15. Stress Management - What is stress and how do I manage it?**

These 3 sessions are designed for people with any type of arthritis. We will review signs and symptoms of stress, techniques for becoming more self aware, and strategies for coping with stress. Other topics will include types of negative thinking and strategies for changing how we think, common types of relaxation exercises, balancing ‘wants’ and ‘shoulds’, effective problem solving, and preventing stress from affecting sleep.

## **16. Navigating the Healthcare System**

In these 3 sessions, we will discuss ways to build a health care team that meets your needs. Topics will include how to build a team you trust, how to develop good relationships with the members of your team, and common pitfalls and strategies in navigating the healthcare system. We will also talk about your “informal” support team (e.g. family and friends), strategies for obtaining support from others, and how to be an effective communicator.

## **17. Managing Emotions - What is this emotional roller coaster and how do I get off?**

These 3 sessions are designed for people with any type of arthritis. We will review the common types of loss associated with arthritis, common emotional reactions to loss, as well as the importance of letting go of your old self and defining who you want to become. Other topics will include strategies for coping with emotional change, signs and symptoms of depression, turning anger into action, the role of spirituality, and putting passion back into your life.

## **18. Biologic Medications for Inflammatory Arthritis**

This class is for people who are new to biologic medications, or are currently on a biologic and considering a change in medication. Learn about the different types of biologic medications and how they can help manage inflammatory arthritis. Learn about when they are used, the benefits, risks, and important things to remember when taking biologics.

## **19. Got Goals?**

It’s easy to set goals, not always so easy to achieve them. Learn how to set goals to make changes you’d like to make and how to keep going when your arthritis or life gets in the way. Bring your ideas and experiences and work in an interactive, supportive group setting.