

Patient Education Program (PEP) – Class Descriptions

You must register in advance to attend education classes.

To register, e-mail: denise.groombridge@vch.ca or call: 604-875-4021

1. **Steps to Managing Your Arthritis**

Learn the steps for effective arthritis self-management: getting a diagnosis; understanding the pain cycle, building a health care team, and taking control of your disease.

2. **Managing Fatigue – How can I save my energy?**

You will learn how fatigue relates to arthritis and how it can affect daily life. This class teaches effective strategies to help you make the best of your energy and get a good night's sleep, from pacing activities to good sleep habits.

3. **Managing Activities (Arms/Hands) – How do I get things done when my arms and hands hurt?**

If pain or loss of movement in your hands, elbows, or shoulders makes life difficult, this class can help! You will learn ways to get things done with less pain and stress on your joints. It will help you find solutions to problems, such as using adapted tools and splints, and lets you share what you have found to be helpful with others.

4. **Managing Activities (Legs/Feet) – How do I get things done when my legs and feet hurt?**

If pain or loss of movement in your feet, knees, or hips makes moving around difficult, this class can help! You will learn how to reduce your pain and put less stress on your joints. It will discuss the benefits of wearing supportive shoes, orthotics, and braces.

5. **Complementary Therapies – Online and Community Resources**

This class will explore various online and community resources for sourcing complementary therapies and tools for managing your health and well-being.

6. **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.

7. **Managing Inflammatory Arthritis – What is inflammatory arthritis and how can I deal with it?**

These three sessions are designed for people with inflammatory arthritis, such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and poly-inflammatory arthritis. The first session will review the meaning of joint swelling and damage, how the disease is diagnosed, blood tests, the risk of complications, and new approaches to managing arthritis with medications. Next, learn how to perform a body scan on yourself and assess what joints are “active”, and understand the meaning of a “flare” and how to manage it. Also, learn the differences between physical activity and therapeutic exercise, and how to problem solve which activities to do at the different stages of disease activity.

8. 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.

9. *Putting Stress Management into Practice

These two sessions will provide guidance and support for people who are having difficulty putting stress management techniques into practice. *It is expected that attendees will have already taken the OASIS Sleep & Stress class or a previous Mary Pack Stress Management class.

10. Navigating the Healthcare System

In these three 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.

11. Managing Emotions – What is this emotional roller coaster and how do I get off?

These two sessions are designed for people with any type of arthritis. We will review the common types of loss associated with arthritis, common emotional reactions, and strategies for dealing with these losses. Other topics will include signs and symptoms of depression, turning anger into action and the importance of acceptance and putting joy back into your life.

12. 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. Also learn about when they are used, the benefits, risks, and important things to remember when taking biologics.