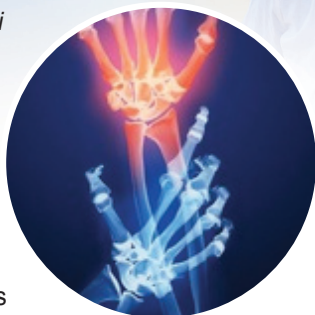


# Drug Free Management of Arthritis

by Dr. Wayne Terai



Arthritis is a common disorder, particularly among older adults.

The pain of arthritis can range from uncomfortable to debilitating. Many who suffer from arthritis use painkillers regularly to manage their condition, but research shows these drugs may be unsafe for long-term use. Although there are several different types of arthritis, the most common is osteoarthritis (aka degenerative joint disease).

Osteoarthritis (OA) is particularly prevalent in older adults as the result of years of wear and tear on the joints. The cartilage that separates bones in each joint becomes dry and degrades, eventually leaving the bones rubbing against each other. The surrounding tissue becomes inflamed and irritated, resulting in pain and stiffness.

Arthritis sufferers often rely on medications to manage the pain (primarily anti-inflammatories and pain killers). While drugs may provide temporary relief, they should be used with caution: they can have dangerous side effects, particularly with long-term use. Although OA is not reversible, there is one technology that can help manage and ease the pain, without the use of medications.

Meditech's BioFlex Low Intensity Laser Therapy (LILT) is once such technology. The BioFlex system has been successfully

used for almost two decades now to treat the pain from the inflammation of arthritis. The idea of light to stimulate healing has been around for centuries, but with advances in science, it has been discovered that all of our cells respond to light. Similar to a plant absorbing sunlight and using that energy to grow and heal, the body can do the same thing. By absorbing specific wavelengths of light, the body can resolve inflammation faster, which results in less stiffness and better function.

Side effects to a treatment are always a consideration when trying something new. Low Intensity Laser Therapy is non-invasive, non-toxic, and has little known side effect since it is simply amplified light that is applied to the surface of the skin. Also known as "cold laser", LILT is a form of non-ionizing energy. This means that the energy level is enough to stimulate the tissue, but it is not so high that it can cause damage to the tissue.

If arthritis is causing you a "pain in the neck" and you are concerned about the long term effects of using anti-inflammatories and pain killers, perhaps look into low intensity laser therapy as an alternative. As always, it is best to discuss your options with a qualified primary health care practitioner.

**Dr. Terai** operates the largest BioFlex Low Intensity Laser Therapy Clinic in the interior of BC.

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