

Chronic Care Management Benefits for Patient with Arthritis

Arthritis is probably one of the most bothersome and frustrating health issues patients face. Classified as both degenerative and chronic, arthritis not only produces pain, but it can also increase symptoms of anxiety and depression, impact independence, contribute to sleep problems, and lead to a host of other chronic health issues due to neglectful self-management of the disorder. Fortunately, patients with the two most common types of arthritis — osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis — are eligible for participation in both chronic care management (CCM) and remote patient monitoring (RPM) services.

With the wraparound care provided within the CCM and RPM care model, arthritis patients can receive the connected support they need to better manage symptoms and slow disease progression. More specifically, participation in these types of programs will help patients develop better self-management skills that can lead to decreased pain and overall physical damage, allowing them to maintain — or even increase — activity levels and better preserve their independent lifestyle.

Arthritis Management With CCM

Chronic care management can positively impact the healthy longevity of arthritis patients in myriad ways. Since the service provides patients with a network of support, they are not alone in managing their disease. CCM for arthritis impacts patients in a number of ways. Let's examine a few.

CCM connections that emphasize the importance of physical activity

While many patients with arthritis think they can find relief from pain by simply moving less and resting more, we know this isn't true, and they are likely only making management more difficult down the road. Chronic care management coordinators can help ensure these patients are connected to community resources that promote physical activity, such as gyms, pools, group or individual exercise classes, and even senior centers that offer physical activity classes. With the help of CCM coordinators, a patient with arthritis can better navigate barriers such as cost, location, and transportation to help ensure they are remaining active and maintaining their mobility for as long as possible.

Address and remove functional limitation barriers

Life with arthritis can be challenging at best. When functional limitations start happening due to decreasing joint mobility and increasing pain, it's time to start meeting those issues head on. Together, the provider, CCM coordinators, and the patient can work as a team to develop a comprehensive care plan for effective symptom management so patient can adapt to life with their disease and not fall victim to it. Chronic care management participation allows care managers to connect and coordinate resources for the patient, such as specialist appointments, medications, and access to assistive devices to help with everyday life and mobility.

Maintaining independence

With chronic care management, it is the job of a CCM care coordinator to help the patient adapt to their arthritis so they can continue living as normal of a life as possible. For care coordinators, this might look like helping the patient find affordable tools that support independence. The current market for assistive devices is both vast and innovative, making it easier for patients to do everyday activities like open jars, grip writing utensils, hold eating utensils, and even help open their gas cap on their car. Furthermore, when assistive devices just aren't enough, care coordinators can help connect the patient with home health or caregiver programs that are designed to help meet some of the patient's everyday needs while allowing them to remain home and more independent.

Remote Patient Monitoring of Arthritic Grip Strength

The strength of one's [grip](#) is viewed as an important biomarker that can help pinpoint the functionality or breakdown of other areas of the human body. This includes overall strength in areas like upper limb function, bone mineral density, cognitive impairment, diabetes, and even malnutrition. Grip strength can even correlate to other oncoming issues like decreasing mobility or the ability to walk fast or far distances.

Incorporating grip strength remote monitoring into a chronic care management program can be accomplished fairly easily with the use of a dynamometer combined with [remote patient monitoring software](#). The [benefits](#) of incorporating such a device and supporting technology into the care plan of a CCM and/or RPM patient with arthritis are many, including tracking disease progression and helping identify which treatments are working well and which ones are not.

While hand dynamometers have always been a well-liked tool in the occupational and physical therapy realms, they can also be a dynamic resource use in the primary care setting. Like other remote patient monitoring solutions, cellular or Bluetooth connected digital hand dynamometers can enhance the patient evaluation and provide the practitioner with ongoing feedback about a patient's continued functionality and disease progression.

Promoting Patient Wellness With the Right Arthritis Care

Arthritis is a lifelong diagnosis, but that doesn't need to mean a life spent in constant pain and discomfort. Enrolling arthritis patients into chronic care management and remote patient monitoring programs will provide them with an opportunity to interact at a more meaningful level with their healthcare team and promote both better engagement and personal responsibility over their care and treatment. With properly assisted self-management of symptoms, patients with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis can remain productive and independent for many years to come, making the services a win for both patients and providers alike.