

Osteoarthritis overview

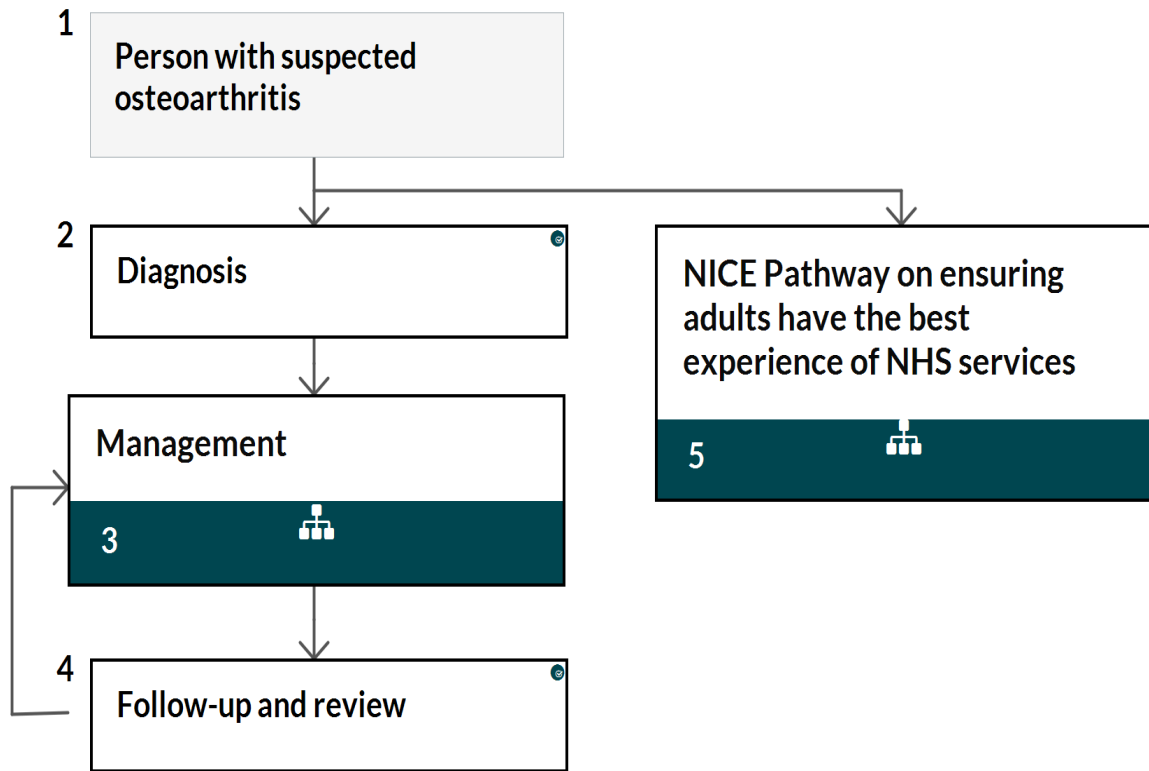
NICE Pathways bring together everything NICE says on a topic in an interactive flowchart. NICE Pathways are interactive and designed to be used online.

They are updated regularly as new NICE guidance is published. To view the latest version of this NICE Pathway see:

<http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/osteoarthritis>

NICE Pathway last updated: 11 December 2020

This document contains a single flowchart and uses numbering to link the boxes to the associated recommendations.



1 Person with suspected osteoarthritis

No additional information

2 Diagnosis

Diagnose osteoarthritis clinically without investigations if a person:

- is 45 or over **and**
- has activity-related joint pain **and**
- has either no morning joint-related stiffness or morning stiffness that lasts no longer than 30 minutes.

Be aware that atypical features, such as a history of trauma, prolonged morning joint-related stiffness, rapid worsening of symptoms or the presence of a hot swollen joint, may indicate alternative or additional diagnoses. Important differential diagnoses include gout, other inflammatory arthritides (for example, rheumatoid arthritis), septic arthritis and malignancy (bone pain).

See [the NICE Pathways on musculoskeletal conditions](#), [rheumatoid arthritis](#), [spondyloarthritis](#) and [suspected cancer recognition and referral: symptoms and findings](#).

Quality standards

The following quality statement is relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

1. Diagnosis

3 Management

[See Osteoarthritis / Managing osteoarthritis](#)

4 Follow-up and review

Offer regular reviews to all people with symptomatic osteoarthritis. Agree the timing of the reviews with the person. Reviews should include:

- monitoring the person's symptoms and the ongoing impact of the condition on their everyday activities and quality of life
- monitoring the long-term course of the condition
- discussing the person's knowledge of the condition, any concerns they have, their personal preferences and their ability to access services
- reviewing the effectiveness and tolerability of all treatments
- support for self-management.

Consider an annual review for any person with one or more of the following:

- troublesome joint pain
- more than one joint with symptoms
- more than one comorbidity
- taking regular medication for their osteoarthritis.

Apply the principles in [tailoring healthcare services for each patient in the NICE Pathway on patient experience in adult NHS services](#) with regard to an individualised approach to services and patient views and preferences.

See also [the NICE Pathway on multimorbidity](#).

Quality standards

The following quality statement is relevant to this part of the interactive flowchart.

6. Timing of review

5 NICE Pathway on ensuring adults have the best experience of NHS services

[See Patient experience in adult NHS services](#)

Sources

Osteoarthritis: care and management (2014 updated 2020) NICE guideline CG177

Your responsibility

Guidelines

The recommendations in this guideline represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, professionals and practitioners are expected to take this guideline fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients or the people using their service. It is not mandatory to apply the recommendations, and the guideline does not override the responsibility to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual, in consultation with them and their families and carers or guardian.

Local commissioners and providers of healthcare have a responsibility to enable the guideline to be applied when individual professionals and people using services wish to use it. They should do so in the context of local and national priorities for funding and developing services, and in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities. Nothing in this guideline should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with complying with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Technology appraisals

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, health professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account, alongside the individual needs, preferences and values of their patients. The application of the recommendations in this interactive flowchart is at the discretion of health professionals and

their individual patients and do not override the responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or their carer or guardian.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to provide the funding required to enable the recommendations to be applied when individual health professionals and their patients wish to use it, in accordance with the NHS Constitution. They should do so in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity and to reduce health inequalities.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.

Medical technologies guidance, diagnostics guidance and interventional procedures guidance

The recommendations in this interactive flowchart represent the view of NICE, arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available. When exercising their judgement, healthcare professionals are expected to take these recommendations fully into account. However, the interactive flowchart does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

Commissioners and/or providers have a responsibility to implement the recommendations, in their local context, in light of their duties to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Nothing in this interactive flowchart should be interpreted in a way that would be inconsistent with compliance with those duties.

Commissioners and providers have a responsibility to promote an environmentally sustainable health and care system and should assess and reduce the environmental impact of implementing NICE recommendations wherever possible.