

**Cycle 5**  
**2505 - Pain Relief for Elbow Arthritis**  
**SCRIPT**

**(1)**

**EMIL DIONYSIAN, MD:**

Generally if you're talking about osteoarthritis, not an inflammatory arthritis, the good first line treatment is heat. Applying heat on the elbow, being a moist heat, a heating pad or a moist, hot towel tends to help the pain because it increases circulation of the blood around the area and generally it's helpful.

**(2)**

**BRIAN HILD, MD:**

The treatment really is dictated by the symptoms, the radiographs, the age of the patient, and what their expectations are.

**(3)**

**EMIL DIONYSIAN, MD:**

Even though elbow is tight, by stretching and loosening of the ligaments, allows less pressure in the joint. So it's heat and stretching are the first two modalities we use. Braces can be used, also tend to take load off the joint. They are more cumbersome, harder to use. However they can be helpful with the pain also.

**(4)**

**BRIAN HILD, MD:**

With elbow arthritis, or any arthritis to any joint, the treatment really maintains to be the same. You try to do it in a step-wise fashion. Medical management, we've got great medications for anti-inflammatory, we've medications that can last 24 hours now. There's over-the-counter medications, there's actually vitamin supplements, glucosamine, the chondroitin sulfates. We try to use these things as a first-line treatment.

**(5)**

**EMIL DIONYSIAN, MD:**

For the short-term, you can use acetaminophen, aspirin or ibuprofen, which are available as a non-prescription on the pharmacies. But they are relatively toxic on the long-term use. So after three to six months, you should check with your primary care to make sure you're not developing any toxicity. If you have an inflammatory arthritis, like rheumatoid arthritis, which is already hot and swollen, probably heat, it won't be the best option. And then you can try other modalities, maybe even cold.

**####**