

QUALITY STANDARDS

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# Osteoarthritis

## Technical Specifications

UPDATE 2024

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# How to Use the Technical Specifications

This document provides technical specifications to support the implementation of the [Osteoarthritis: Care for Adults With Osteoarthritis of the Knee, Hip, Hand, or Shoulder](#) quality standard. Care for people with osteoarthritis is a critical issue, and there are significant gaps and variations in the quality of care that people with osteoarthritis receive in Ontario. Recognizing this, Ontario Health released the quality standard to identify opportunities that have a high potential for quality improvement.

This document is intended for use by those looking to implement the *Osteoarthritis* quality standard, including clinicians working in regional or local roles.

This document has dedicated sections to describe the following:

- Indicators that can be used to measure progress toward the overarching goals of the quality standard as a whole
- Statement-specific indicators that can be used to measure improvement for each quality statement within the quality standard

Indicators may be provincially or locally measurable:

- Provincially measurable indicators: how we can monitor the progress being made to improve care at the provincial level using provincial data sources
- Locally measurable indicators: what you can do to assess the quality of care that you provide locally

The following tools and resources are provided as suggestions to assist in the implementation of the *Osteoarthritis* quality standard:

- The [Getting Started Guide](#) outlines the process for using quality standards as a resource to deliver high-quality care; it contains evidence-based approaches, as well as useful tools and templates to implement change ideas at the practice level
- Our [Spotlight Report](#) highlights examples from the field to help you understand what successful quality standard implementation looks like

# Measurement to Support Improvement

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This document accompanies Ontario Health’s *Osteoarthritis: Care for Adults With Osteoarthritis of the Knee, Hip, Hand, or Shoulder* quality standard. The Osteoarthritis Quality Standard Advisory Committee identified 5 overarching indicators to monitor the progress being made to improve care for people with osteoarthritis in Ontario. All of the overarching indicators are measurable locally (the indicators are not well defined, and data sources do not currently exist to measure them consistently across health care teams and at the system level).

The advisory committee did not identify any provincially measurable indicators because provincial data sources on care for osteoarthritis are limited, as is the ability to identify people with osteoarthritis. When data sources or methods are developed to accurately identify people with osteoarthritis, the committee will reconsider provincial measures of success for this quality standard.

The *Osteoarthritis* quality standard also includes statement-specific indicators that can be used to measure improvement for each quality statement in the quality standard.

Additional information on measuring indicators can be found in the [Quality Standards Measurement Guide](#). The measurement guide also includes descriptions of data sources that can be used to support quality standard indicators that are measured consistently across health care teams, health care sectors, and the province.

## Equity Considerations

Ontario Health is committed to promoting health equity and reducing disparities, and encourages collecting data and measuring indicators using equity stratifications that are relevant and appropriate for your population, such as patient socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. These may include age, income, region or geography, education, language, race and ethnicity, gender, and sex. Please refer to Appendix 3, Values and Guiding Principles, in the quality standard for additional equity considerations.

# Quality Standard Scope

This quality standard addresses care for adults (18 years of age or older) with osteoarthritis of the knee, hip, hand (i.e., thumb or fingers), or shoulder (i.e., the glenohumeral joint). The quality standard focuses on the assessment, diagnosis, and management of osteoarthritis for people across all health care settings and clinicians. It provides guidance on nonpharmacological and pharmacological care. It covers referral for consideration of joint surgery but does not address specific surgical procedures. This quality standard does not apply to care for people with osteoarthritis affecting the spine, other peripheral joints (i.e., elbow, wrist, foot, ankle), or neck or low back pain. Similarly, this quality standard also excludes people with inflammatory arthritis or medical conditions and treatments that can lead to osteoarthritis.

This quality standard includes 10 quality statements addressing areas identified by Ontario Health's Osteoarthritis Quality Standard Advisory Committee as having high potential for improving the quality of osteoarthritis care in Ontario.

# Overarching Indicators That Can Be Measured Using Only Local Data

You might want to assess the quality of care you provide to your patients with osteoarthritis. You might also want to monitor your own quality improvement efforts. It could be possible to do this using your own clinical records, or you might need to collect additional data. We recommend the following potential indicators, which currently can be measured using only local data collection:

## Indicator 1: Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who report the long-term control of their pain as acceptable

- Dimension of quality: patient-centred, effective
- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who report the long-term control of their pain as acceptable
- Data source: local data collection via patient survey

## Indicator 2: Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who report a high level of success in coping with and self-managing their condition

- Dimension of quality: patient-centred, effective
- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who report a high level of success in coping with and self-managing their condition
- Data source: local data collection via patient survey

## Indicator 3: Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who have timely access to appropriate rehabilitation management strategies (such as education, exercise, and weight management)

- Dimension of quality: patient-centred, timely
- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who had timely access to appropriate rehabilitation management strategies (such as education, exercise, weight management)
- Note: the definition of *timely* may vary depending on the type of appropriate management strategy
- Data sources: local data collection via electronic medical records and patient survey

#### **Indicator 4: Median wait time to first appointment with a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management (i.e., additional skills in rheumatology, orthopaedic surgery, sport and exercise medicine, or pain management)**

- Dimension of quality: patient-centred, timely
- Inclusions: people with osteoarthritis with a clinically indicated reason for referral and who had an appointment with a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management
- Method: the median is the number of days within which 50% of people with osteoarthritis waited from the day of referral to a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management to the day of their first appointment
- Data source: local data collection
- Note: while the median is 1 measure of the distribution, other measures, such as the mean or quartiles, may also be used to measure distribution

#### **Indicator 5: Percentage of people with osteoarthritis referred to a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management (i.e., additional skills in rheumatology, orthopedic surgery, sport and exercise medicine, or pain management) who have their first appointment in a timely manner**

- Dimension of quality: patient-centred, timely
- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis with a clinically indicated reason for referral and who had an appointment with a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who had their first appointment in a timely manner
- Data source: local data collection
- Note: the target time frame to see a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management will vary depending on the type of clinician and the clinical characteristics of the patient

# Statement-Specific Indicators

The *Osteoarthritis* quality standard includes statement-specific indicators that are provided as examples; you may wish to create your own quality improvement indicators based on the needs of your population. We recommend that you identify areas to focus on in the quality standard and then use 1 or more of the associated indicators to guide and evaluate your quality improvement efforts.

## Quality Statement 1: Clinical Assessment for Diagnosis

**Percentage of people aged 40 and older with symptoms typical of osteoarthritis who undergo an x-ray or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to make a diagnosis (a lower percentage is better)**

- Denominator: total number of people aged 40 and older with symptoms typical of osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who undergo an x-ray or MRI to make a diagnosis
- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 2: Comprehensive Assessment to Inform the Care Plan

**Percentage of people diagnosed with osteoarthritis who have a comprehensive assessment of their needs and development of a care plan initiated within 3 months of their diagnosis**

- Denominator: total number of people diagnosed with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who have a comprehensive assessment of their needs and development of a care plan initiated within 3 months of their diagnosis
- Data source: local data collection

**Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who identify a significant change in their monitored symptom(s), or a new symptom or a new goal for their care plan, and who review their comprehensive assessment of needs and their care plan with their clinician**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis who have completed a comprehensive assessment of their needs and who identify a significant change in their monitored symptoms(s) or a new symptom or goal for their care plan
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who review their comprehensive assessment of needs and care plan with their clinician
- Data source: local data collection



## Quality Statement 3: Patient Education

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who receive education in an accessible format on osteoarthritis and its management**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who receive education in an accessible format on osteoarthritis and its management
- Data source: local data collection

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who report a high level of success in coping with and self-managing their condition**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who report a high level of success in coping with and self-managing their condition
- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 4: Patient Self-Management Plan

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who have a documented self-management plan**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who have a documented self-management plan
- Data source: local data collection

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who identify a significant change in their monitored symptoms(s), or a new symptom or goal for their care plan, and who review their self-management plan with their clinician**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis with a documented self-management plan who identify a significant change in their monitored symptom(s) or a new symptom or goal for their care plan
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who review their self-management plan with their clinician
- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 5: Therapeutic Exercise

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who participate in progressive neuromuscular training, muscle strengthening, and aerobic exercise programs**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who participate in progressive neuromuscular training, muscle strengthening, and aerobic exercise programs
- Data source: local data collection

### **Local availability of therapeutic exercise programs delivered by clinicians with expertise in the prescription of exercise**

- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 6: Physical Activity

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who receive information and support to participate in daily physical activity from a clinician**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who receive information and support to participate in daily physical activity from a clinician
- Data source: local data collection

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who complete a weekly minimum of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who complete a weekly minimum of 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity
- Data source: local data collection

### **Local availability of programs to support a physically active lifestyle, including community-based fitness programs and facilities**

- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 7: Weight Management

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis whose waist circumference or body mass index (BMI) is documented in their medical chart**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator whose waist circumference or BMI is documented in their medical chart
- Data source: local data collection via medical records

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who are overweight or obese and who receive a documented weight-management strategy**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who receive a documented weight-management strategy
- Data source: local data collection

### **Local availability of community resources (e.g., dietitian or weight management program delivered by a trained clinician)**

- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 8: Pharmacological Symptom Management

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who are prescribed pain-relieving medication and who also receive nonpharmacological treatments**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis who are prescribed pain-relieving medication
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who also receive nonpharmacological treatments for pain management
- Data source: local data collection

### **Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who are prescribed pain-relieving medication and who have a documented discussion of risks and benefits of their medication with their primary care clinician**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis who are prescribed pain-relieving medication
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who have a documented discussion of risks and benefits of their medication with their primary care clinician
- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 9: Referral to a Clinician With Additional Skills in Osteoarthritis Management

### Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who are referred to a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management when clinically indicated

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis with a clinically indicated reason for referral to a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who are referred to a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management
- Data source: local data collection

### Percentage of people with osteoarthritis whose primary care clinician received and shared with them a recommended plan for treatment from the clinician with additional skills in the management of osteoarthritis after their visit

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis who were seen by a clinician with additional skills in the management of osteoarthritis after referral by their primary care clinician
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator whose primary care clinician received and shared with them a plan for treatment from the clinician with additional skills in the management of osteoarthritis after their visit
- Data source: local data collection

### Median wait time to first appointment with a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management (i.e., additional skills in rheumatology, sport and exercise medicine, or pain management)

- Inclusions: people with osteoarthritis with a clinically indicated reason for referral and who had an appointment with a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management
- Method: the median is the number of days within which 50% of people with osteoarthritis waited from the day of referral to a clinician with additional skills in osteoarthritis management to the day of their first appointment
- Note: while the median is 1 measure of the distribution, other measures, such as the mean or quartiles, may also be used to measure distribution. This indicator is also included in *Overarching Indicators That Can Be Measured Using Only Local Data*, above, with the same specifications
- Potential stratification: referral clinician type
- Data source: local data collection

### Local availability of clinicians with additional skills in osteoarthritis management

- Data source: local data collection

## Quality Statement 10: Referral for Consideration of Joint Surgery

**Percentage of people with osteoarthritis who report that their symptoms are not sufficiently controlled and are negatively impacting their quality of life, who are referred to an orthopaedic surgeon for consideration for joint surgery**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis who report that their symptoms are not sufficiently controlled and are negatively impacting their quality of life
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who are referred to an orthopaedic surgeon for consideration for joint surgery
- Data source: local data collection

**Percentage of people with osteoarthritis referred for consideration of joint surgery who have documentation of having received nonsurgical management prior to their referral**

- Denominator: total number of people with osteoarthritis referred for consideration of joint surgery
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who have documentation of having received nonsurgical management prior to their referral
- Data source: local data collection

**Percentage of people with knee osteoarthritis who are referred for surgical consultation for an arthroscopic procedure (a lower percentage is better)**

- Denominator: total number of people with knee osteoarthritis who are referred for surgical consultation
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who are referred for an arthroscopic procedure
- Data source: local data collection

**Percentage of people with knee osteoarthritis who undergo a knee arthroscopic procedure (a lower percentage is better)**

- Denominator: total number of people with knee osteoarthritis
- Numerator: number of people in the denominator who had knee arthroscopy
- Data sources: Discharge Abstract Database (DAD), National Ambulatory Care Reporting System (NACRS), Ontario Health Insurance Plan claims database (OHIP)

# Looking for More Information?

Visit [hqontario.ca](https://www.hqontario.ca) or contact us at [QualityStandards@OntarioHealth.ca](mailto:QualityStandards@OntarioHealth.ca) if you have any questions or feedback about this quality standard.

**Ontario Health**  
500–525 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5G 2L3

**Toll Free:** 1-877-280-8538  
**TTY:** 1-800-855-0511  
**Email:** [QualityStandards@OntarioHealth.ca](mailto:QualityStandards@OntarioHealth.ca)  
**Website:** [hqontario.ca](https://www.hqontario.ca)

Need this information in an accessible format? 1-877-280-8538, TTY 1-800-855-0511,  
[info@OntarioHealth.ca](mailto:info@OntarioHealth.ca)

Document disponible en français en contactant [info@OntarioHealth.ca](mailto:info@OntarioHealth.ca)

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