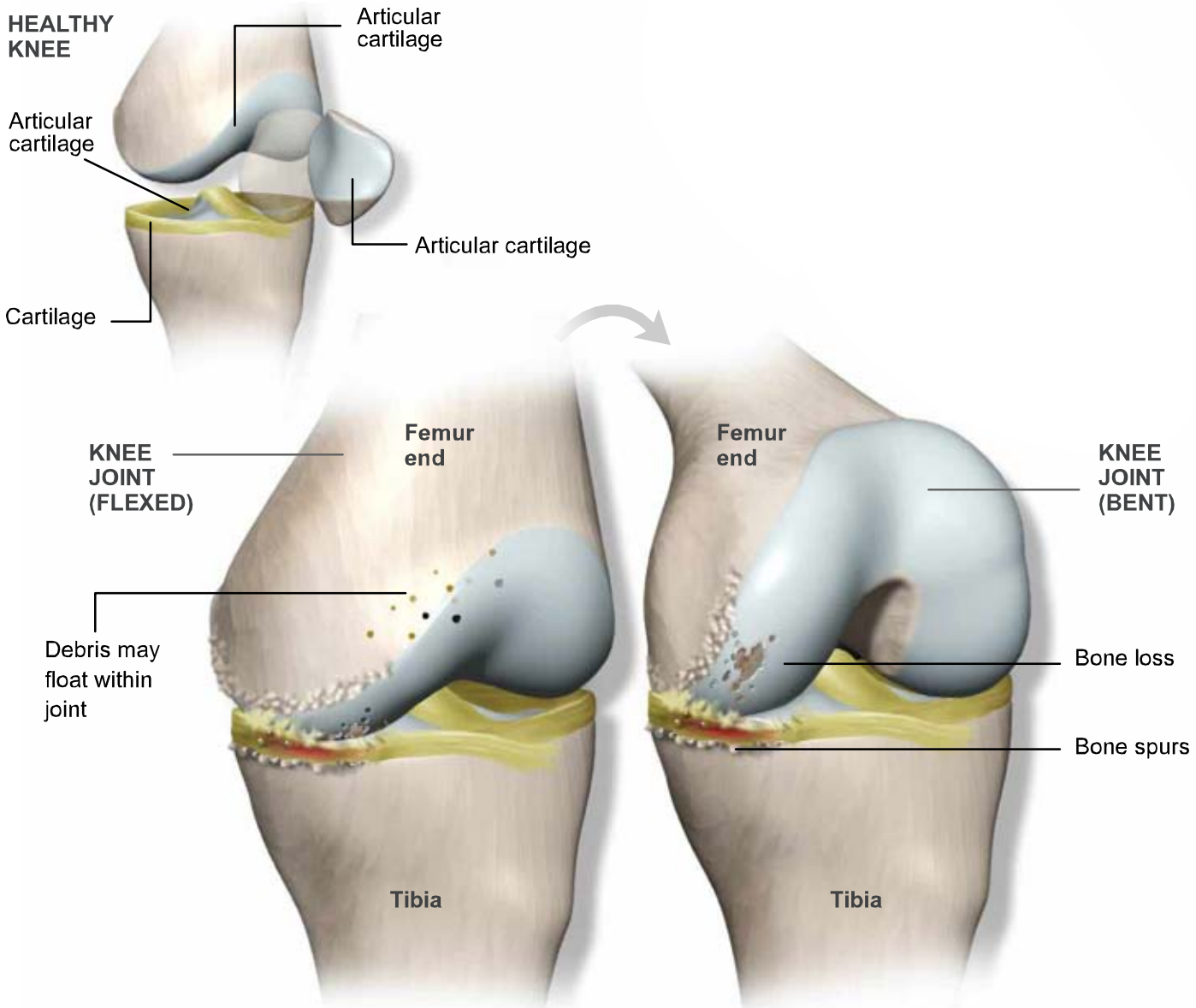


**KNEE ARTHRITIS**



Arthritis, also called osteoarthritis or degenerative arthritis, involves the swelling and damage of the joints. It causes pain, stiffness and limited movement. Since knees are the primary weight-bearing joints in the body, they are most at risk for osteoarthritis. Risk factors include age, heredity, injury and obesity.

**Damaged Cartilage**

Cartilage is a smooth, protective joint tissue that cushions the bones and allows joints to move freely. Cartilage can deteriorate over time. As it loses its cushioning ability, heavy use or injury may increase its rate of deterioration.

**Cartilage Loss**

Eventually, as cartilage wears away completely, bone rubs against bone.

**Bone Spurs**

Over time, lumpy growths of bone called bone spurs or osteophytes form along the edges of the joint.

**Symptoms**

An arthritic knee may feel stiff, and leg motion may be limited. Standing or walking for long periods may make pain in the joint worse. Severe arthritis may create pain at all times, even when at rest. If the cartilage wear is only on one side of the knee, the sufferer may become bow-legged or knock-kneed.

**Treatment**

Treatment options may include cortisone injections, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, use of a splint or brace, exercise, weight loss and modification of daily activities. In some cases, arthroscopic or surgical correction may be needed. In severe cases, total or partial joint replacement with metal or ceramic components may be required.