Elbow Arthritis

What is it?

Arthritis occurs when the cartilage that pads the bones is worn down or becomes damaged. Arthritis in the elbow is not as common as it is in the knees or shoulders. This can occur without injury to the joint and is more common in men.

Symptoms:

- Pain
- Decrease in range of motion
- Locking or grating sensation
- Swollen joint

How is it diagnosed?

Upon clinical evaluation by an elbow specialist, furthering imaging studies, such as an x-ray, will show the degenerative changes affecting the joint.

Treatment:

Non-surgical treatment involves:

- Over the counter pain medications
- Formal physical therapy
- Activity modifications
- Corticosteroid injections (recommend limiting the number of these)
- Viscosupplement injections
Surgical intervention is pursued when conservative options fail. Minimally invasive procedures, such as an arthroscopy, allows for short term relief by removing loose bodies and any other degenerative tissue. In extreme cases where the joint is worn completely, a joint replacement may be warranted.