

Arthritis

STATISTICS:

- 46 million Americans report that a doctor told them they have arthritis or other rheumatic conditions. Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, limiting the activities of more than 17 million adults.
- Physical activity has been shown to reduce pain and improve function and mental health among people with arthritis, yet adults with arthritis are significantly less likely to engage in recommended levels of moderate or vigorous physical activity, and 37% of adults with arthritis are inactive.
- By 2030, nearly 67 million of U.S. adults (25%) will have doctor-diagnosed arthritis. This heralds an increasing societal and health-care system burden in the United States.

Reduce Your Risk Month

RESOURCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis>

Arthritis Foundation

800-568-4045

P.O. Box 7669, Atlanta, GA 30357-0669

<http://www.arthritis.org>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/arthritis.cfm>

American Juvenile Arthritis Organization

http://www.arthritis.org/communities/juvenile_arthritis/about_ajao.asp



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

The word *arthritis* actually means joint inflammation. The term *arthritis* is used to describe more than 100 rheumatic diseases and conditions that affect joints, the tissues which surround the joint and other connective tissue. The pattern, severity and location of symptoms can vary depending on the specific form of the disease. Typically, rheumatic conditions are characterized by pain and stiffness in and around one or more joints. The symptoms can develop gradually or suddenly. Certain rheumatic conditions can also involve the immune system and various internal organs of the body. Early diagnosis and appropriate management of arthritis, including self-management activities, can help people with arthritis decrease pain, improve function, stay productive, and lower health care costs. Key self-management activities include the following:

Develop Your Skills—Self-management education, such as the Arthritis Foundation Self Help Program (AFSHP), or the Chronic Disease Self Management Program (CDSMP) help you develop the skills and confidence to manage your arthritis on a day to day basis. For example, AFSHP has been shown to reduce pain even 4 years after participating in the program.

Be Active—Research has shown that physical activity decreases pain, improves function, and delays disability. Make sure you get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least 3 days a week. You can get activity in 10-minute intervals. Read about the physical activity programs the CDC recommends for people with arthritis.

Watch Your Weight—The prevalence of arthritis increases with increasing weight. Research suggests that maintaining a healthy weight reduces the risk of developing arthritis and may decrease disease progression. A loss of just 11 pounds can decrease the occurrence (incidence) of knee osteoarthritis.

See Your Doctor—Although there is no cure for most types of arthritis, early diagnosis and appropriate management is important, especially for inflammatory types of arthritis. For example, early use of disease-modifying drugs can affect the course of rheumatoid arthritis. If you have symptoms of arthritis, see your doctor and begin appropriate management of your condition.

Protect Your Joints—Joint injury can lead to osteoarthritis. People who experience sports or occupational injuries or have jobs with repetitive motions like repeated knee bending have more osteoarthritis. Avoid joint injury to reduce your risk of developing osteoarthritis.