

Doctor's Bag



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WALKING FOR ARTHRITIS PAIN RELIEF

One of the best ways to relieve the pain and disability associated with arthritis is walking. It's easy, affordable and even fun. Here are some walking tips from the Arthritis Foundation:

- Walk with a buddy. If you want to have a safe, enjoyable walking experience, find a buddy to keep you company. If you can't find a human buddy, walk the dog!
- Invest in a decent pair of walking shoes. This is really the only financial investment walking requires. A good pair of shoes will keep you blister-free and in balance.
- Start slowly. In the beginning, walk at an easy pace about 10 minutes, three to five days a week. Maintain good posture to avoid unnecessary joint strain. Swing your arms freely, step gently and don't lock your knees. Stay close to home or in an area with benches in case you become fatigued. After a week or so, add five minutes to your walk and keep adding five-minute intervals on a weekly basis. Walk a little faster when you feel up to it.

Your personal physician is a great resource for arthritis information. If you experience joint pain or inflammation, give your doctor a call to discuss the course of condition management that's most appropriate for you.

HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

Living with Arthritis

The word, *arthritis*, refers to more than 100 diseases involving some form of joint inflammation. The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis.

Arthritis is usually characterized by pain and stiffness in and around one or more joints. It is the most common cause of disability in the United States, affecting all ages and all race and ethnic groups.

The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following arthritis management strategies:

- Stay 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 three days a week.
- Watch Your 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 of new knee osteoarthritis.
- See Your Doctor — Although there is no cure for most types of arthritis, early diagnosis and appropriate management is important. If you have symptoms of arthritis, see your doctor and begin appropriate management of your condition.
- Protect Your Joints — People who experience sports or occupational injuries or have jobs with repetitive motion like repeated knee-bending are at higher risk of contracting osteoarthritis.



In addition to the CDC's website, www.cdc.gov/arthritis, the Internet is an excellent resource for information about arthritis. Here are web addresses for some of the more popular sites:

The Arthritis Foundation www.arthritis.org

Arthritis Today www.arthritistoday.org

The Johns Hopkins Arthritis Center www.hopkins-arthritis.org

WebMD Arthritis and Joint Pain Center arthritis.webmd.com

DidUKnow?

The most recent arthritis statistics are from the CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Survey conducted in 2003.

- 46.4 million adults in the United States have doctor-diagnosed arthritis (just over 1 in 5 adults).
- Arthritis affects all race and ethnic groups: 37.2 million Caucasian adults; 4.6 million black adults; 3.1 million Hispanic adults and 1.6 million adults of other races.
- The risk of arthritis increases with age and is more common among women than men.
- An estimated 294,000 children younger than age 18 have some form of arthritis or rheumatic condition. This represents approximately 1 in 250 children.
- Nearly 19 million American adults say that arthritis limits their usual activities in some way.
- Medical expenditure for arthritis and other rheumatic conditions in 2003 were \$80.8 billion, up from \$51.5 billion in 1997.
- Earnings losses for arthritis and other rheumatic conditions in 2003 were \$47 billion, up from \$35.1 billion in 1997.

Newsletter Information Sources

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, www.cdc.gov/arthritis

Arthritis Today, "Three Ways to Walk," by Linda Melone, www.arthritistoday.org/fitness/walking/tips-and-strategies/ways-to-walk-2.php