



News from the Arthritis Foundation

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New Report: Arthritis Is a Potential Barrier to Physical Activity for Adults with Diabetes

Physical Activity is Vital for Successful Management of Both Diseases

Atlanta, GA – May 8, 2008 – People with diagnosed diabetes are nearly twice as likely to have arthritis, and the inactivity caused by arthritis hinders the successful management of both diseases, according to a new *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR) study released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is one of the first studies of its kind to look at the relationship between arthritis and diabetes and the outcomes associated with physical activity.

The report finds that arthritis appears to be a barrier to being physically active for people with diabetes. Despite the fact that physical activity helps control blood glucose levels and reduces joint pain, people with both diseases are more likely to be physically inactive (29.8%) compared to those with diabetes alone (20.1%).

“Arthritis is a frequent co morbid condition for adults with diabetes,” said John H. Klippel, M.D., president and CEO, Arthritis Foundation. “But for both diseases, physical activity is key to effective management. A lack of physical activity actually results in undesirable consequences including increased pain, stiffness, inflammation, physical limitation and potential disability.”

Arthritis is the most common cause of disability in the U.S., affecting one in every five Americans (21 percent). Diabetes affects approximately 7 percent of the American population, with nearly a third unaware that they have the disease.

“Everyone faces the same common barriers to being more physically active, such as lack of time, competing responsibilities, lack of motivation and difficulty finding an enjoyable activity,” said Chad Helmick, M.D., CDC epidemiologist and co-author of the study. “Those who also have arthritis face additional disease-specific barriers, such as concerns about aggravating arthritis pain and causing further joint damage, and knowing which types and amounts of activity are safe for their joints.”

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The good news is that safe and effective self-management programs are available. People living with arthritis and diabetes can benefit from participating in one of the Arthritis Foundation's exercise or self-management programs, such as the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program, the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program and the Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program," said Klippel. "People should contact their local Arthritis Foundation chapter at www.arthritis.org for information about the resources available in their specific area."

The Importance of Taking Action

Arthritis currently limits activity for 19 million Americans, taking a \$128 billion toll on the U.S. economy annually in direct [medical expenditures] and indirect [lost earnings] costs. With the aging of the Baby Boomer population, the prevalence of arthritis is expected to rise by 40 percent in the next two decades alone.

"Despite evidence of the growing need for intervention to stop the rise of this disabling disease in our population, the level of federal funding for arthritis public health and research has declined steadily by nearly \$28 million over the past six years," said Klippel. "We are on the verge of a public health crisis and must take action now."

The Arthritis Foundation is working to help address this ever-growing problem through the proposal of legislation. The Arthritis Prevention, Control and Cure Act (S. 626/H.R. 1283) proposes to strengthen arthritis public health initiatives, which would ensure that more people are diagnosed early and avoid pain and permanent disability.

Tips for Exercising with Arthritis

Following are several tips for those affected by arthritis to help them incorporate healthy physical activity into their schedules:

Walk At Least Three Days per Week

Walking for exercise should take low-to-moderate exertion. Set a goal to walk 10 minutes every day, to start. Consider increasing your goal to 10 minutes three times a day or 30 minutes a day at least three times each week.

Stretch

It is important to stretch before and after walking. Remember that walking involves more than just your legs, so be sure to also stretch your lower back, chest and arms as well.

Bring a Friend

Having a walking partner is a great way to stay motivated! You encourage each other to stay active, but talking as you walk is a great way to pass the time.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

As people gain weight they increase the stress placed on their joints, particularly their knees. Not to mention that being overweight may cause a person to become tired quickly and not able to follow a healthy exercise regimen.

For information about Arthritis Foundation programs in your area or for a complimentary copy of the Arthritis Foundation's "Arthritis and Diabetes" brochure, which includes self-management tips for arthritis and diabetes, visit the Arthritis Foundation at www.arthritis.org.

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation is the leading health organization addressing the needs of some 46 million Americans living with arthritis, the nation's most common cause of disability. Founded in 1948, with headquarters in Atlanta, the Arthritis Foundation has multiple service points located throughout the country.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$380 million in research grants since 1948. Celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, the foundation helps individuals take control of their arthritis by providing public health education; pursuing public policy and legislation; and conducting evidence-based programs to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis. Information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-283-7800 or www.arthritis.org.

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