



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Activate Your Body

Physical Activity Among Adults Aged ≥ 50 Years — United States, 2014

Recorded: September 13, 2016; posted: September 15, 2016

[Announcer] *This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

As people age, it gets tougher to be physically active. While cutting back on certain activities is inevitable, finding ways to exercise on a regular basis is important for maintaining good health.

Dr. Kathy Watson is a researcher with CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of older adults maintaining an active lifestyle. Welcome to the show, Kathy.

[Dr. Watson] Thank you, Bob. I'm happy to be here.

[Dr. Gaynes] Kathy, how many older adults in the U.S. are not physically active?

[Dr. Watson] Unfortunately, 31 million, or 29 percent, of adults 50 years and older do not participate in any physical activity.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some benefits to regular physical activity?

[Dr. Watson] As adults age, they are more likely to have a chronic disease and physical activity can help delay, prevent, or even help manage many of those diseases. Physical activity is also important for healthy aging. For example, physical activity can help with balance, with stamina, flexibility, and overall coordination.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some reasons older adults aren't getting enough exercise?

[Dr. Watson] Older adults might be inactive for a number of reasons. One reason might be that they feel that can't be active because of a chronic disease—they feel it might make their condition worse. For example, a person with arthritis may be experiencing joint pain and they think that by doing physical activity, it might make the pain worse. In reality, walking and other types of low impact activities have been shown to actually reduce pain.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some chronic conditions that can actually be helped or even prevented by regular exercise?

[Dr. Watson] In addition to arthritis, physical activity can help prevent and manage many other chronic diseases, like heart disease, diabetes, even some cancers. In addition, regular physical activity can help with depression and cognitive functioning in older adults.

[Dr. Gaynes] What kinds of physical activity do you recommend for older adults?

[Dr. Watson] Well, older adults are a varied group. Older adults who are healthy and fit and have no limiting chronic conditions should be as active as younger adults. Older adults with chronic conditions should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow. All adults should avoid inactivity. Some physical activity is better than none and adults in participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits.

[Dr. Gaynes] Kathy, where can listeners get more information about physical activity among older adults?

[Dr. Watson] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov/physical activity](http://cdc.gov/physical%20activity). ‘Physical activity’ is all one word.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Kathy. I’ve been talking today with CDC’s Dr. Kathy Watson about the importance of adults staying physically active.

Any activity, from gardening and household chores to walking and swimming, can be beneficial. If you suffer from a chronic condition, check with your health care provider about a regimen that’s safe and helpful for you.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for A Cup of Health with CDC.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.