



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Easing the Pain of Arthritis*

*Prevalence of Doctor-Diagnosed Arthritis and Arthritis-Attributable Effects Among Hispanic Adults, by Hispanic Subgroup — United States, 2002, 2003, 2006, and 2009*

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*[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.*

[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.

Advances in medicine have resulted in a steady increase in life expectancy in the U.S. But as the population ages, problems associated with aging are becoming more prevalent. Arthritis is one of the leading causes of disability, particularly in older persons.

Dr. Louise Murphy is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss ways to ease the pain of arthritis. Welcome to the show, Louise.

[Dr. Murphy] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Louise, what is arthritis and are there different types?

[Dr. Murphy] Arthritis is a condition that affects people's joints, and the most common symptoms of arthritis are pain, aching, and stiffness. There are more than 100 types of arthritis, and osteoarthritis is the most common.

[Dr. Gaynes] How many people in the U.S. have been diagnosed with arthritis?

[Dr. Murphy] We know that 50 million people, or one in five U.S. adults, have doctor-diagnosed arthritis.

[Dr. Gaynes] Does it affect mostly older adults?

[Dr. Murphy] While arthritis can affect people of all ages, it's most typical among older people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Is arthritis more common in any particular racial or ethnic group?

[Dr. Murphy] We know that arthritis is more common among whites and blacks compared with Hispanics. Within the Hispanic population, arthritis is most common among Puerto Ricans.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the most common symptoms of arthritis?

[Dr. Murphy] The most common symptoms are pain, aching, and stiffness and it can limit people's ability to do simple things, like walking around the block.

[Dr. Gaynes] Louise, what are the treatment options for people with arthritis?

[Dr. Murphy] Bob, there are several options for dealing with the pain of arthritis. Medications are one approach to help people with pain. Exercise is also a good way of reducing pain associated with arthritis and increasing mobility. And it may seem that exercising can cause more discomfort but we know that doing simple exercises, like walking, can reduce pain and increase mobility. We also know that the benefits of regular exercise can be equal to that of taking pain medications. And self management classes can teach people strategies for dealing with the symptoms of arthritis.

[Dr. Gaynes] Can arthritis be prevented?

[Dr. Murphy] People who are obese have an increased risk of developing osteoarthritis, which is, we mentioned, the most common type of arthritis. Losing weight can decrease the risk of developing osteoarthritis.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about arthritis?

[Dr. Murphy] More information is available at [www.cdc.gov/arthritis](http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Louise. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Louise Murphy about the disabling condition of arthritis.

Although there is no cure for arthritis, it can be effectively treated with medications, physical therapy, and exercise. Self management classes can teach people strategies to handle their arthritis. Don't let arthritis stand in your way.

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](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.