



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Don't Let Pain Keep You Down

*Arthritis as a Potential Barrier to Physical Activity Among Adults with Heart Disease
— United States, 2005 and 2007*

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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.

Physical activity is an important part of managing heart disease. A recent CDC study found that more than half of adults with heart disease have some form of arthritis, and that fear of joint pain and making their arthritis worse may keep them from being active.

Dr. Chad Helmick is a physician with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. He's joining us today to discuss the importance of physical activity in controlling heart disease and arthritis. Welcome to the show, Chad.

[Dr. Helmick] Thank you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Chad, how prevalent is heart disease in the United States?

[Dr. Helmick] Well, heart disease affects over 14 million people in the United States, and by heart disease, I mean things like heart attacks and chest pain.

[Dr. Gaynes] How many people suffer from arthritis?

[Dr. Helmick] Well, we estimate over 46 million people in the United States have arthritis.

[Dr. Gaynes] So Chad, can regular exercise help either of these conditions?

[Dr. Helmick] Yeah, they certainly can and that's part of the management for both of these conditions. For heart disease, it can help reduce blood pressure and improve your cholesterol profile, and for arthritis, it can help reduce pain and improve your function.

[Dr. Gaynes] Chad, are people with both heart disease and arthritis getting the physical activity they need?

[Dr. Helmick] It doesn't look like they are. Our study showed that those people are about 30 percent less active than people that have heart disease alone. This is probably because the people who have arthritis are worried about increasing their joint pain or maybe even damaging their joints more by being physically active. They're not sure, really, what activities are safe.

[Dr. Gaynes] What kinds of exercise are both safe and beneficial for people with these conditions?

[Dr. Helmick] Well, certainly walking is a great exercise. People with arthritis also find that swimming and bicycling help a lot. If people have difficulty trying to decide what to do, there's programs they can go to, with the Arthritis Foundation and others, that can help them think through the issues involved with their particular arthritis and heart problems. If people have any questions or difficulties, they can certainly consult their physician about this.

[Dr. Gaynes] Chad, where can listeners get more information on this topic?

[Dr. Helmick] Well, they can go to the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/arthritis and there you'll find a section that deals with arthritis interventions.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks Chad. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Chad Helmick about the importance of physical activity in controlling heart disease and arthritis.

Remember, if you have heart disease and arthritis, don't let the fear of joint pain keep you from getting the physical activity you need. If you have any questions, consult your healthcare provider before beginning an exercise program.

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, 24/7.