



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Alleviating Arthritis

*Prevalence of Doctor-Diagnosed Arthritis and Arthritis-Attributable Activity Limitation
— United States, 2007–2009*

Recorded: October 5, 2010; posted: October 7, 2010

[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.

People are living longer because of advances in medicine, but the longer they live, the more susceptible they are to arthritis, a chronic condition that causes pain and stiffness in the joints.

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

[Dr. Hootman] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, how many people in the U.S. have arthritis?

[Dr. Hootman] Nearly 50 million U.S. adults have arthritis and 21 million are limited in their usual activities because of their arthritis. We found the prevalence of arthritis is increasing by about one million people per year, and the number with activity limitations is increasing faster than we expected.

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

[Dr. Hootman] People with arthritis have pain, aching, and stiffness in and around their joints, and people with inflammatory types of arthritis, like rheumatoid arthritis, also have a lot of fatigue.

[Dr. Gaynes] Besides getting older, are there any other conditions that can lead to arthritis?

[Dr. Hootman] Obesity is one of the leading risk factors for osteoarthritis, one of the most common kind of arthritis. It increases the risk of getting arthritis, but it also complicates the management of arthritis by increasing pain and worsening a person's function.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the most common and effective ways to treat arthritis?

[Dr. Hootman] What we recommend is that people first educate themselves. They can take a class or course to learn how to manage their disease. They should be physically active because exercise increases muscle strength and can help support the joints. You should watch your weight. If you're overweight, lose weight; if you're normal weight, maintain your weight. Protect your joints from injuries and see your health care provider.

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

[Dr. Hootman] They can go to www.cdc.gov/arthritis.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Jennifer. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Jennifer Hootman about ways to alleviate the pain caused by arthritis.

Maintaining a healthy weight and exercising regularly are two of the best ways to overcome the discomfort. If you have symptoms of arthritis, check with your health care provider for a treatment regimen that's best 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, 24/7.