

National prevalence of doctor-diagnosed arthritis and arthritis-attributable activity limitation—United States 2003-2005  
FIVE MINUTE PODCAST SCRIPT

STANDARD CDC VOICEOVER INTRO

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INTRO MUSIC

Welcome to A Cup of Health with CDC a weekly broadcast of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Matthew Reynolds

Matthew:

Do you have pain, aching, stiffness, or swelling in or around your joints? Have you had these symptoms for 3 months or more? Then maybe it's time to talk with your health care provider because these are all symptoms of arthritis.

Arthritis is one of the most common chronic diseases in the U.S. In fact, about 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. have arthritis. That's over 46 million adults. And as the U.S. population ages, the number of adults suffering from arthritis is expected to grow to 67 million by the year 2030.

With so many adults affected by it, it's no surprise that arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. As many as 17 million adults have some type of activity limitation because of arthritis.

The CDC has been keeping a close eye on this disease and its effect on the public. Here to talk about their latest study on arthritis is Dr. Jennifer Hootman of CDC's Division of Adult and Community Health.

Welcome to the show, Dr. HOOTMAN.

DR. HOOTMAN: Thank you, Matthew, it's good to be here.

Matthew: Dr. Hootman, What exactly is arthritis?

Dr. HOOTMAN: Well Matt, arthritis is actually a short term that we use that actually refers to a set of over 120 different rheumatic conditions. These conditions primarily affect the joints and the tissues that surround the joints. Symptoms include, pain, aching, stiffness, and swelling in those joints and it can also spread to the tissues and muscles and the ligaments around the joints.

Matthew: Well, since arthritis is so common, what can people expect in terms of consequences from having it?

Dr. HOOTMAN: Well, arthritis is the leading cause of disability among the adults in the U.S. So, because of the chronic pain and stiffness that's associated with the symptoms, it leads to decreased mobility, they just can't get around they can't get to the mailbox, they can't get to the bank which leads to activities of daily living that they can't do that are necessary. They're often disabled in work, they have reduced mental health including major depression and sleep impairment which then leads to an overall reduced quality of life.

Matthew: Dr. Hootman If someone thinks they might have arthritis, what should they do?

Dr. HOOTMAN: Well the first thing they should do is see their health care provider. Because there's certain types of arthritis its very important to get on specific medications early in the course of the disease. But for the majority of the types of arthritis, osteoarthritis it's important to change behaviors so that they can lessen the pain and the long term consequences of the disease such as the functional limitation and disability.

Matthew: Well you've identified some things that people can do if they think they might have arthritis. What would you suggest for people who have already been given the diagnosis.

Dr. HOOTMAN: Well after their diagnosis, there are four key self-management strategies for people with arthritis. The first one is watch your weight. Losing even just a little bit of weight can take a significant amount of pressure of the joints. The second is develop

your skills. There are education courses available in the community that help people learn how to manage their disease. The third thing is protect your joints. Joint injury is a risk factor for arthritis and people who already have arthritis, having an injured joint will increase their pain and worsen their function. So it's important to see your doctor if you get injured. And the last thing is be active. We know people with arthritis have less pain and better function when they're physically active.

Matthew: Well Dr. Hootman, you're talking about being physically active, what suggestions would you have for people in terms of activity and how often should they do it?

Dr. HOOTMAN: Right. The guidelines we go by is that the activity should be low-impact like walking or bicycling, swimming, they should do it at least three days a week, for thirty minutes a day. And the good news is they can take that thirty minutes and actually break it up into ten or fifteen minute bouts so it's doable for most people with arthritis.

Matthew: Dr. Hootman, what would you tell our listeners is the most important thing that they should remember about arthritis?

Dr. HOOTMAN: Well the first thing is that arthritis is not necessarily an inevitable part of aging. There are things you can do to manage your disease and even prevent complications. The second thing is don't wait until you already have some limitation to do something about it. Act early to lose weight if you need to, increase your physical activity, take a class, and see your health care provider.

Matthew: Well thanks Dr. Hootman, that's very helpful and thanks very much for talking with us today.

Dr. Hootman: Thank you.

Matthew: Well, that's it for this week's show. Don't forget to join us next week. Until then, be well. This is Matthew Reynolds for A Cup of Health With CDC.

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information that affects you, your family, and your community, please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).