

Healthy Living with Arthritis: Tai Chi for Arthritis Program

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

[Dr. Foster] Welcome to *Healthy Living with Arthritis*; I'm your host, Dr. Anika Foster. Remaining physically active is important for effective management of arthritis and reducing the associated pain. However, many adults with arthritis, find that chronic joint pain limits their physical activity. Luckily, there are several available arthritis-appropriate evidence-based interventions, proven to help increase physical activity and reduce joint pain.

This episode of *Healthy Living with Arthritis* is devoted to discussing the *Tai Chi for Arthritis Program*.

Today, I'm speaking with Audrey Williams, a Public Health Advisor in CDC's Arthritis Management and Well-Being Program. Welcome, Audrey! Thanks for being here today!

[Audrey Williams] Thank you Dr. Foster, thank you for having me!

[Dr. Foster] So...to get us started, can you tell us a little about arthritis-appropriate evidence-based interventions and how CDC is involved?

[Audrey Williams] Great question, Dr. Foster! Arthritis-appropriate evidence-based interventions or AAEBIs, are programs that have been tested and are shown to improve arthritis symptoms such as pain and activity limitations. These programs must meet certain criteria, be tested among people with arthritis and have arthritis-specific health outcomes to become recognized as evidence-based and arthritis-appropriate and can take place in several places including community-based settings, clinical settings, and virtual or self-directed settings. The criteria were initially developed by CDC's Arthritis-Management and Well-Being Program and were adapted and are now implemented by the Osteoarthritis Action Alliance. The Arthritis Management and Well-Being Program works with states and national organizations to promote these programs among people living with chronic conditions such as arthritis and chronic pain. *Tai Chi for Arthritis* is an example of one of these programs.

[Dr. Foster] Wonderful! Can you tell us a little more about how Tai Chi for Arthritis work?

[Audrey Williams] Absolutely! Tai Chi for Arthritis or TCA is a physical activity-focused arthritis-appropriate evidence-based intervention. TCA is based on the sun-style of Tai Chi and helps to improve muscular strength, flexibility, fitness, and range of motion. *Tai Chi for Arthritis* is easy to learn, and according to peer-reviewed studies on the program, regular practice will bring enjoyment and health benefits quickly. TCA incorporates three components a warmup and cool-down exercise, six basic core movements, and six advanced extension movements. TCA also has the option of including nine additional movements that can be added to enhance program sustainability and to maintain participant interest. The program is available as a 16-week course, which meets for one-hour weekly, and as an 8-week option which meets for two

one-hour classes weekly. TCA was initially designed specifically for people with arthritis; however, Tai Chi is also proven to be an effective strategy for falls prevention.

[Dr. Foster] This sounds like a really amazing program! How can those interested in participating get involved?

[Audrey Williams] Good question! *Tai Chi for Arthritis* is available as a community-based group workshop, and available online as a remote workshop. Both in-person and remote courses are led by a Tai Chi for Health Institute Board certified instructor. The Tai Chi for Health Institute's website also has a tool where you can find certified instructors in your state.

[Dr. Foster] That's awesome! What else should healthcare providers and public health professionals know about the program?

[Audrey Williams] *Tai Chi for Arthritis* qualifies for the Title III-D funding under the Older American's Act or OAA. This funding was established in 1987. It provides grants to states and territories based on their share of the population ages 60 and older for programs that support healthy lifestyles and promote healthy behaviors. Evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion programs may reduce the need for more costly medical interventions. Priority is given to serving older adults living in medically underserved areas of the state and those who are of greatest economic need.

[Dr. Foster] This program sounds like an incredible option for people with arthritis. Thank you for taking the time to inform the public of the benefits of participating in *Tai Chi for Arthritis*.

[Audrey Williams] Thank you for having me Dr. Foster!

[Dr. Foster] Is there anywhere people can go to learn more about this program?

[Audrey Williams] Absolutely! For more information on TCA, visit *Tai Chi for Health Institute dot org* and select programs.

[Dr. Foster] Thanks for tuning in! I have been speaking with Audrey Williams, a Public Health Advisor with CDC's Arthritis Management and Well-Being Program. Remember, physical activity is an arthritis pain reliever!

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