



## A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

### *Pain Management*

*National Arthritis Awareness Month – May 2017*

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

[Dr. Dooling] 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. Kathleen Dooling.

Arthritis is one of the most common chronic conditions in the United States. Unfortunately, as the population ages, it's only expected to increase. 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 manage the pain of arthritis. Welcome to the show, Jennifer.

[Dr. Hootman] Thank you.

[Dr. Dooling] Jennifer, how common is arthritis in the U.S.?

[Dr. Hootman] The term arthritis encompasses over 100 different conditions, therefore, it is one of the most common chronic conditions in the U.S. Currently, 54 million U.S. adults have arthritis, and this number is expected to increase to over 78 million by the year 2040.

[Dr. Dooling] Does it mostly impact older people?

[Dr. Hootman] That is mostly a myth. Many people still think that arthritis is a normal part of aging, but, in fact, two thirds of the people with arthritis are under age 65. That means they're working age and therefore, their arthritis may affect their work.

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

[Dr. Hootman] Osteoarthritis, one of the most common types of arthritis, is characterized by pain, aching, stiffness and swelling in and around a joint. There are other types of arthritis, like Lupus, that may affect other organs like the kidneys and the heart.

[Dr. Dooling] Can arthritis be cured?

[Dr. Hootman] Unfortunately, no, but we can successfully manage arthritis.

[Dr. Dooling] How can the pain of arthritis be managed?

[Dr. Hootman] There are five key things that people with arthritis can do. First, they should see their health care provider because there are medications, physical therapy, and procedures like

injections that can help their pain and swelling. They can also be physically active. People think, “Oh, I can’t be active because it hurts and it might hurt my knees worse,” but, in fact, physical activity increases strength, improves function, and reduces pain. Also, if they’re overweight or obese, weight loss, even small amounts of weight loss, like 10 to 12 pounds, can take pressure off the joints. They can also take a class, called a self management education class. They’re available out in the community and are low cost. And the last thing they can do is to protect their joints from injury.

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

[Dr. Hootman] They can go to our website at [cdc.gov/arthritis](http://cdc.gov/arthritis).

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Jennifer. I’ve been talking today with Dr. Jennifer Hootman about ways to manage the pain of arthritis.

There is no cure for arthritis, but it can be managed. If you or someone you know is experiencing chronic joint pain, talk to a health care provider about ways to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling 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.