

The most rewarding benefit after attending the program has been the weight loss. I wanted to participate because I knew losing any extra weight would help my joint pain. With less pressure on my joints, I am able to move a bit more freely than before.

—Walk with Ease participant

Public Health Message

Maintaining a healthy weight reduces the risk of developing arthritis, may decrease disease progression, and is significant in improving quality of life.

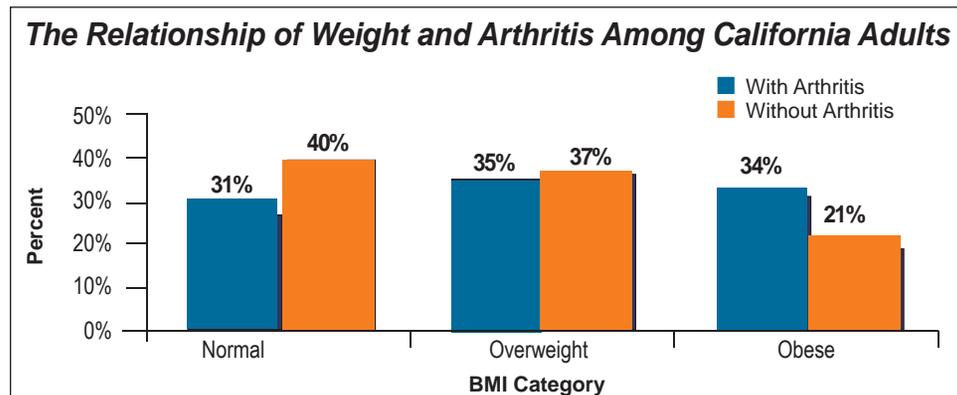
Arthritis and Weight

Maintaining a healthy weight protects your joints. The obesity epidemic affects individuals in all age, income, education, and racial/ethnic groups.

- Obesity is common among people with arthritis and is a modifiable risk factor of arthritis.¹
- In the United States, obesity rates are 54% higher among adults with arthritis compared to those without arthritis.²
- Weight control and injury prevention strategies can lower a person's risk of developing osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis.
- Modest weight loss among individuals with knee osteoarthritis has been shown to provide meaningful improvements in physical function, self-reported disability, pain symptoms, and quality of life.³
- Losing as little as 10-12 pounds can make a difference in pain and function.⁴

The Relationship of Weight and Arthritis

Body Mass Index (BMI) is used as a screening tool for weight categories that may lead to health problems. BMI is a number calculated from a person's weight and height. Overweight and obese individuals are at increased risk for many diseases and health conditions including arthritis. There is a strong independent relationship between excess body weight and self-reported arthritis among adults in the United States.⁵



Source: State of California, Department of Public Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2011.

BMI Interpretation				
BMI	Below 18.5	18.5–24.9	25.0–29.9	30.0 and Above
WEIGHT STATUS	Underweight	Normal	Overweight	Obese

The Problem

- Arthritis is a common comorbidity among adults with obesity. In California, 21% of adults who are overweight also have arthritis and 30% of adults who are obese also have arthritis.⁶
- Being overweight can increase pressure on weight-bearing joints such as the hips, knees, ankles and increase pain and inflammation associated with osteoarthritis.³
- Obesity and knee osteoarthritis are among the most frequent chronic conditions affecting Americans aged 50-84 years.⁷
- Obesity is associated with a number of musculoskeletal conditions and is responsible for significant disability and impaired quality of life.⁸
- Arthritis-related joint pain and functional limitation may contribute substantially to low rates of physical activity among adults with obesity.¹

Implications

- Given the rise in obesity prevalence and the risk of arthritis due to obesity, it is expected that the prevalence of arthritis in the U.S. population will mirror obesity trends.⁹
- By 2030, an estimated 67 million U.S. adults will have doctor-diagnosed arthritis (25% of the total project adult population).¹⁰
- Total annual estimated cost** to California for overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity was \$41.2 billion in 2006¹¹ (\$21.0 billion for overweight and obesity, \$20.2 billion for physical inactivity).
 - Health care costs** totaled \$20.7 billion (\$12.8 billion for overweight and obesity, \$7.9 billion for physical inactivity).
 - Lost productivity costs** reached \$20.4 billion (\$8.2 billion for overweight and obesity, \$12.3 billion for physical inactivity).

Total Annual Estimated Cost for Overweight/Obesity and Physical Inactivity (dollars in billions) 2006		
	Overweight/Obesity	Physical Inactivity
Health Care Costs	\$12.8	\$7.9
Lost Productivity	\$8.2	\$12.3
Total Annual Cost	\$21.0	\$20.2

Healthy People 2020 Objectives¹³

- “ *Reduce the proportion of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis who experience a limitation in activity due to arthritis or joint symptoms.* ” and “ *Increase the proportion of overweight and obese adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis who receive health care provider counseling for weight reduction.* ”

Public Health Strategies

To reverse the growing obesity epidemic, an effective and funded public health response is needed including the delivery and access to effective services and programs, environmental and systems change strategies, surveillance, and research.¹²

- Increase access to and availability of effective services and programs including evidence-based physical activity and self-management education programs.
 - Walk with Ease, a program of the Arthritis Foundation
 - Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program
 - Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program
 - Chronic Disease Self-Management Program
 - Tomando Control de su Salud
 - Arthritis Self-Management Program
 - Programa de Manejo Personal de la Artritis
- A health care provider's advice to a person with arthritis to lose weight and be more physically active strongly correlates with healthy behaviors such as attempts to lose weight.²
 - 50% of adults with arthritis were told by their doctor to lose weight for their arthritis.⁶
 - 56% of California adults with arthritis have been told by their doctor to exercise for their arthritis.⁶

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