



# New York State Arthritis Fact Sheet

## What is arthritis?

- The term “arthritis” describes more than 100 diseases and conditions affecting joints, the surrounding tissues, and other connective tissues, such as tendons and ligaments. Symptoms of arthritis typically include pain, swelling, stiffness and aching in and around the joint and can develop suddenly or gradually over time.<sup>1</sup>

## Arthritis in New York

- Arthritis is one of the most prevalent chronic conditions in New York State (NYS), affecting approximately 3.6 million NYS adults; nearly a quarter of the state’s adult population age 18 and over (24.4%).<sup>2</sup>
- Of adults with arthritis, 2.2 million (59.8%) are women and 1.5 million (40.2%) are men.<sup>2</sup> Over half (50.9%) of NYS adults aged 65 and older have arthritis. Approximately 34% of NYS adults ages 45 to 64 have arthritis.<sup>2</sup>
- Arthritis is one of the most common causes of disability in NYS; more than half (53.4%) of NYS adults with arthritis have limitations in their daily activities due to arthritis or joint symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

## Arthritis Risk Factors<sup>1</sup>

### Modifiable

**Obesity**  
**Joint injuries**  
**Occupation**  
**Infection**

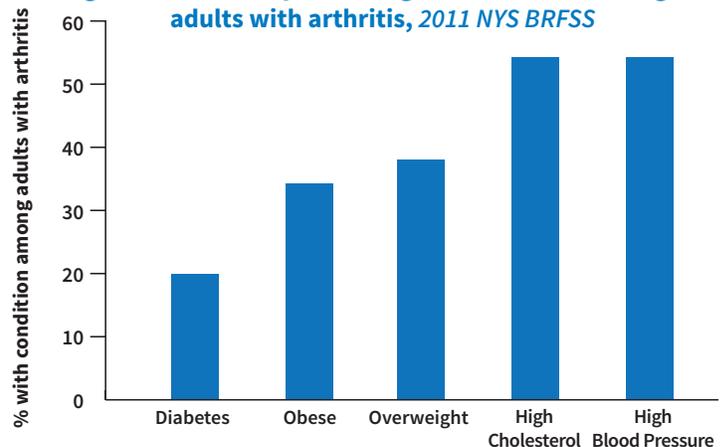
### Non-modifiable

**Age**  
**Gender**  
**Genetics**

## Arthritis and other chronic conditions

- Arthritis commonly co-occurs with obesity, heart disease and diabetes (*Figure 1*) and can cause complications in the management of other diseases.<sup>3,4,5</sup> Arthritis-related joint pain and mobility limitations may be a barrier to adopting healthy behaviors such as engaging in physical activity, for fear of causing further joint pain or damage.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1. Commonly occurring comorbidities among adults with arthritis, 2011 NYS BRFSS**



Data source: 2011 New York State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

## Arthritis and self-management

- Evidence-based self-management education programs have been proven to improve knowledge and self-care behaviors. These interventions help participants to reduce pain, depression and frustration; improve physical activity; and increase energy and confidence in their ability to gain control of arthritis and other chronic conditions. →

- Developed by Stanford University, the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program is being delivered in communities across NYS, and is a highly successful self-management education program backed by more than 20 evaluations.<sup>8</sup>
- Despite their clear value, community-based self-management education programs are sorely underutilized. In NYS, only 13.2% of adults with arthritis have participated in such programs.<sup>2</sup>

## Arthritis and physical activity

- Scientific studies have shown that regular, moderate physical activity can reduce pain and improve function, mood, and quality of life for adults with arthritis.<sup>6,7,8</sup>
- Physical activity can also help manage other chronic conditions that are common among adults with arthritis, such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.<sup>3,4,5,9</sup>
- Despite the proven benefits of physical activity, NYS adults with arthritis are more likely to report physical inactivity (32.7%) as compared to those without arthritis (24%).<sup>2</sup>
- The CDC Arthritis Program recommends six community-based physical activity interventions, taught by trained instructors and proven to improve the quality of life of people with arthritis: Arthritis Foundation's Exercise, Aquatic and Walk With Ease programs, Active Living Every Day, Fit and Strong!, and EnhanceFitness.<sup>10</sup>

## Arthritis and weight

- Among NYS adults who have received a doctor's diagnosis of arthritis, 72.3% are overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup>
- Arthritis is common among obese adults (34.6%) and may be a special barrier to increasing physical activity – a recommended intervention for arthritis and obesity.<sup>5</sup>
- Low impact activities such as walking, swimming and biking are safe and effective for obese adults with arthritis and can have a role in both weight and pain reduction.<sup>12,13</sup>
- Losing as little as five percent of total body weight can reduce the stress on the knees, hips and lower back, and can reduce the progression of the disease.<sup>14</sup>

## Arthritis and work

- Of NYS adults with arthritis, 35.8% report having trouble working due to their arthritis.<sup>2</sup>
- The percent of NYS adults who report having trouble working due to their arthritis is highest among those with less than a high school education.<sup>2</sup>

## NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) Arthritis Program

The NYSDOH Arthritis Program aims to improve the quality of life and health outcomes among New Yorkers with, and at risk for, arthritis. Program activities include:

- Strategically increasing access, use and availability of arthritis-appropriate, evidence-based physical activity and self-management programs statewide.
- Implementing strategies to improve clinical-community linkages to ensure health care providers refer patients to arthritis-appropriate, evidence-based programs.
- Conducting arthritis surveillance among NYS adults through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.
- Implementing a comprehensive health communications campaign to increase awareness about the benefits of physical activity among adults with arthritis.

*The NYSDOH Arthritis Program can be contacted at:*

**518-408-5132**

OR

**arth@health.state.ny.us**

*For more information, please visit:*

**health.ny.gov/arthritis**



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