

Osteoarthritis: A Leading Cause of Disability

The pain, stiffness and swelling from osteoarthritis (OA) can limit function and mobility and diminish quality of life. These symptoms may impinge on the ability to perform daily and work routines such as holding a cup, writing or typing, standing or sitting for long periods, bending and walking, or going up and down stairs.

OA is a chronic condition in many individuals who also have heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Physical activity is a recommended management strategy for all these conditions but can be more difficult for people with OA because of joint pain.

To learn more about the vision and strategies for reducing the burden of OA, read [**A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis: 2020 Update**](#)

OA | OSTEoarthritis
ACTION ALLIANCE



WHY OA MATTERS

- **People with OA are more likely to fall, and 1/3 suffer from depression or anxiety due to pain, fatigue, and disability from OA.**
- OA **increases the risk of social isolation**, possibly because of pain and depression caused by OA.
- **Opioids and benzodiazepines are prescribed for 27% of people with OA**, despite the high risk of adverse side effects and drug addiction and a lack of evidence supporting the effectiveness of this approach.
- **OA is the second most costly health condition treated in U.S. hospitals.** In 2013, this cost was \$16.5 billion, or 4.3% of the combined cost for all hospitalizations. It covered about 21 million ambulatory care visits and 3 million inpatient hospitalizations for people with OA and related disorders.

ACT NOW!

Take these actions to help make a positive difference in the health of your community members. Look for opportunities to assure equity in access and delivery of your interventions.

- 1** **Share information and materials** about OA prevention, treatment, and effective interventions/programs.



[Arthritis Foundation – Osteoarthritis](#): Consumer-friendly information from the Arthritis Foundation to help patients and the public learn about osteoarthritis and treatments.



[OAAA – Learn About Arthritis](#): Downloadable handouts and other valuable resources to help individuals learn about osteoarthritis prevention and management strategies.



[Weight Management Resources](#): Downloadable handouts for employees in English and Spanish, including “Weight Gain and Joint Pain” and “Can My Weight Make My Joint Pain Worse?”



- 2** **Provide access to evidence-based, community-based, self-management education and physical activity programs**, including alternative, low-cost, flexible delivery options (e.g., online self-directed guides, low-tech phone contact, self-help program books, and tool kits). If resources are not available to offer programs at your organization, **partner with other organizations** to offer programs or to create linkages between programs for **cross-referrals** to address other health conditions.



[CDC Workplace Health Promotion](#): Sound, actionable information, vetted by the CDC and experts, to help employers launch or expand a workplace health promotion program.



[Community-based programs, recommendations, and resources to address OA](#): An online library of resources for community organizations to help implement arthritis lifestyle management programs.



[Making the Case for Arthritis Programs](#): Several resources from the CDC, the Arthritis Foundation, and other trusted organizations that demonstrate the numerous benefits of arthritis programs.



[Walk With Ease Registration Portal](#): The online registration portal for the Arthritis Foundation’s Walk With Ease program. Participants can sign up for free through OAAA, or organizations can purchase their own portal.

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Support community-level policy and system change efforts that improve nutrition, physical activity, and injury prevention environments.

[Arthritis Foundation – Advocacy 101](#): Tips for getting started with local, state, or national advocacy efforts for arthritis issues.

[The Community Guide](#): A collection of evidence-based findings from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to help select interventions to improve health and prevent disease in your state, community, community organization, business, healthcare organization, or school.

[OAAA Walkability Audit](#): Tools and resources for communities or organizations wanting to evaluate whether a specific environment is walkable for people with arthritis.

[Step It Up! The Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities](#): Tips and guides for a variety of sectors to increase walking and improve access.



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Develop partnerships with public health, health care, and/or businesses to enhance the well-being of employees, the community, and the population as a whole.



[Leveraging Partnerships to Develop a Sustainable Approach to Increasing Adoption of Arthritis-Appropriate, Evidence-Based Interventions with Employers](#): Developed by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), describes a step-by-step approach and lessons learned for developing partnerships between employers, public health, and other organizations to increase opportunities for arthritis care.



[Community-Integrated Health Care for Professionals](#): Resources designed by the National Council on Aging to help aging, public health, and disability professionals develop stronger ties with the health care sector to achieve better health through chronic disease self-management education and other evidence-based programs.

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