



spotlight on health

Getting Older Doesn't Have To Be Painful

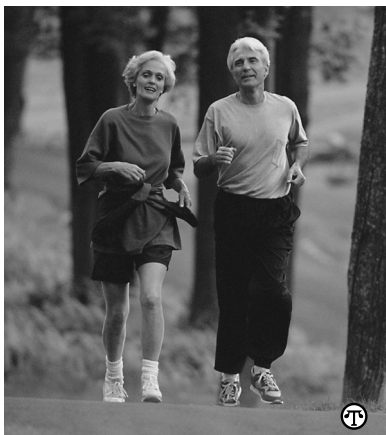
(NAPSA)—These days, older Americans are on the go and are spending their retirement traveling, playing sports and volunteering. While some older adults are enjoying longer, healthier and more productive lives thanks to advances in medicine, countless others needlessly suffer in pain.

While pain is a common aspect of life for those 65 and older, it's not something that comes "naturally" with growing older and shouldn't be dismissed. There's often an underlying problem that should be addressed.

For instance, back injuries, headaches and arthritis are frequent causes of pain. With proper diagnosis and treatment, pain caused by these ailments can be effectively managed. Left untreated, pain can lead to problems sleeping, the loss of mobility—even anxiety or depression.

"Older adults should address pain with their health care professional—they shouldn't assume pain is just a natural part of aging—it may be a sign of a medical problem that can be managed," said Penney Cowan, founder of the American Chronic Pain Association. "Communicating effectively with your health care professional is the first step to proper diagnosis and treatment. Your health care professional can help develop a treatment plan that best fits your needs."

In fact, if you are an older per-



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son in pain, you should talk to your health care professional first, rather than trying to remedy the problem at home. Treatment options vary, and often a multidisciplinary approach may work best—even with a chronic medical problem, your pain can be treated. Your health care professional may suggest counseling, relaxation techniques, aerobic exercise, or may prescribe medicines, such as opioids, to treat your pain.

The bottom line: Pain shouldn't slow you down in your "golden years."

More information and helpful tips for coping with pain are available at www.partnersagainstpain.com.