

Health Trends

Americans In Denial = A Nation In Pain

(NAPSA)—A public health epidemic is stalking Americans and they don't even know it. Results of a nationwide awareness survey conducted by the Arthritis Foundation prove many Americans don't realize they already may be showing signs of arthritis, and far more do not realize they are now at prime risk.

Of the more than 5,000 people surveyed:

- 67 percent were found to be at risk for arthritis.
- 52 percent were not aware they were at risk for developing arthritis.
- More than half (53 percent) were already exhibiting symptoms of arthritis.

"These statistics are alarming to the Arthritis Foundation," said Tino Mantella, president and CEO, Arthritis Foundation. "People who are at risk or are already showing symptoms should discuss the results with their doctor so they can take measures now to reduce future pain and disability."

Surprisingly, of those surveyed, 51 percent do not plan to see their doctor about their joint health.

"Many people wait to see a doctor because they think they are too young to have arthritis, yet millions of Americans, especially baby boomers, will reach retirement and not be able to live the way they had hoped," said Dr. John Klippel, medical director, Arthritis Foundation. "It is distressing that denial is going to cause people to be in a lot of pain."

One in every six Americans has a form of arthritis, but the many different faces of arthritis may surprise you. Arthritis is the nation's number one cause of disability, affecting children, teens, baby boomers and seniors. As the population ages, the impact of arthritis is expected to affect an estimated one in five people (or nearly 60 million) by 2020.

"Arthritis is a serious and debilitating disease that impacts quality of life for millions of people, but what Americans may not know is that in many cases, it can be prevented," said Klippel.

Although genetics can put a person at risk for arthritis, there are healthy lifestyle measures Americans can take to prevent



and manage arthritis. To maintain healthy joints, the Arthritis Foundation recommends:

- **Lose weight.** Every extra pound you gain puts four times the stress on your knee. A small weight loss of as little as 11 pounds may cut your risk of osteoarthritis of the knee by 50 percent.

- **Build Strong Bones.** Boost your calcium intake because a diet rich in this important mineral helps to keep your bones sturdy and can lower your risk of osteoporosis (the brittle bone disease). There are plenty of sources including milk, yogurt, broccoli, kale, figs, salmon and calcium supplements.

- **Bulk Up.** Strength training is the best way to boost your metabolism. Research also shows lifting weights creates denser bones and builds stronger muscles that help stabilize and protect joints.

The Arthritis Foundation is offering a free booklet, *51 Ways to be Good to Your Joints*. It includes tips on nutrition, exercise, talking with your doctor, managing your daily tasks and more. It also contains a 12-question quiz to assess your own risks and symptoms of arthritis. For a free copy, contact the Arthritis Foundation at 800-283-7800 or www.arthritis.org.

The Arthritis Foundation is the only nationwide, nonprofit health organization helping people take greater control of arthritis by leading efforts to prevent, control and cure arthritis and related diseases.

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