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STATES REPORT OBESITY DRASTICALLY HIGHER AMONG ADULTS WITH ARTHRITIS AND ON THE RISE *Arthritis Awareness Month Calls on Americans to Take Action*

ATLANTA, April 28, 2011 – People with arthritis are significantly more likely to be obese than those without the disease and the rate among them is increasing in far more states than it is decreasing, cites new CDC data released in conjunction with National Arthritis Awareness Month in May. According to the [Arthritis Foundation](#), the study underscores the need to expand obesity prevention, screening and treatment in adults with arthritis.

The study, published in the April 29 issue of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, found obesity prevalence among adults with arthritis significantly increased in 14 states and Puerto Rico, stayed the same in most states/territories, and significantly decreased only in the District of Columbia. Nearly all states reported obesity rates above the Healthy People 2020 goal of 30 percent for all adults.

Among the key findings:

- Obesity prevalence is 54% higher among adults with arthritis compared with adults without arthritis. The median obesity prevalence for 50 states and the District of Columbia was:
 - In 2003: 33.2% with arthritis, 21.4% without arthritis
 - In 2009: 35.2% with arthritis, 23.6% without arthritis
- Obesity prevalence among adults with arthritis varied greatly by state. In 2009, obesity prevalence among adults with arthritis ranged from 26.9% in Colo. to 43.5% in La.
- From 2003 to 2009, obesity prevalence among people with arthritis increased in far more states that it decreased.
 - Increased: Kan., Ky., La., Mich., Miss., Mo., Mont., N.M., S.C., S.D., Utah, Wash, W. Va., Wis., Puerto Rico
 - Decreased: District of Columbia

“Weight loss and physical activity can improve arthritis symptoms among obese adults with arthritis,” says Arthritis Foundation Vice President of Public Health, Dr. Patience White. “Moving just 30 minutes daily, even 10-15 minutes at a time, can ease joint pain, improve mobility and reduce fatigue often associated with arthritis.”

“Obese adults with arthritis should not despair, even if they have a lot of weight to lose. Even small amounts of weight loss, as little as 10-12 pounds for a 200-pound person, can improve arthritis symptoms and function,” says Centers for Disease Control and Prevention epidemiologist, Jennifer M. Hootman.

National Arthritis Awareness Month Action

For the 50 million Americans and the many more at risk in the United States, the pain, cost and disability of arthritis is unacceptable. That’s why in May – National Arthritis Awareness Month – the Arthritis Foundation is calling on the nation to take action against arthritis, the nation’s leading cause of disability. For information about arthritis and tips on losing weight and getting physically active, visit www.arthritistoday.org.

About the Arthritis Foundation

Striking one in every five adults and 300,000 children, arthritis is the nation’s leading cause of disability. The Arthritis Foundation (www.arthritis.org) is committed to raising awareness and reducing the impact of this serious, painful and unacceptable disease, which can severely damage joints and rob people of living life to its fullest. The Foundation funds life-changing research that has restored mobility in patients for more than six decades; fights for health care policies that improve the lives of the millions who live with arthritis; and partners with families to provide empowering programs and information.

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