



What is the impact of arthritis and what are Canadians doing to manage their condition?

2009

- › Arthritis affects more than **4.2 million Canadians or 16%** of the population over the age of 15 years.¹
- › Providing Canadians and their health professionals with the information and tools needed to effectively manage arthritis will help people with arthritis lead full and active lives.
- › Arthritis profoundly affects people's physical and mental health. In addition, arthritis compromises people's ability to perform basic activities and earn a living.

Fast facts from the *2009 Survey on Living with Chronic Diseases in Canada*

Arthritis affects more than 4.2 million Canadians or 16% of the population over the age of 15 years. With the aging population, this number is expected to increase to approximately 7 million (20%) by 2031.¹

Close to three in five people with arthritis are of working age (i.e., age less than 65 years).¹ Providing Canadians and their health professionals with the information and tools needed to effectively manage arthritis will help people with arthritis lead full and active lives.

The Public Health Agency of Canada developed and funded the **2009 Survey on Living with Chronic Disease in Canada** to provide new information on how arthritis affects Canadians and the approaches that they and their health professionals are using to manage the disease. This recent survey, conducted by Statistics Canada, interviewed a nationally-representative sample of 4,565 Canadians aged 20 years and older who reported having been diagnosed with arthritis by a health professional.

Arthritis has a major impact on individuals and families

Arthritis profoundly affects people's physical and mental health

- 30% rated their general health as fair or poor.
- 21% reported that they have felt the need for help with their emotions, stress or mental health in order to manage their arthritis.

General health got progressively worse for some

- 23% rated their health as somewhat worse or much worse than a year ago.

Basic activities that most people are able to do are challenging for people with arthritis

- 64% reported difficulties getting a good night's sleep.
- 59% reported difficulties with participating in recreation, leisure, hobbies or social activities.
- 54% reported difficulties doing household chores.
- 50% reported difficulties running errands or shopping.
- 42% reported difficulties getting around the house.
- 39% reported difficulties bathing or dressing.



› Just **two in three Canadians with arthritis (65%)** stated they received recommendations about lifestyle changes from a health care professional to help manage their arthritis.

› Only **two in three Canadians with arthritis (63%)** reported they engaged in exercise/physical activities and **one in two (56%)** stated they attempted to control/lose weight to manage their arthritis.

The ability to earn a living is also compromised for people with arthritis

- 51% stated they required some kind of job modification to continue working (i.e., change in the number of hours worked, type of work or how work tasks are carried out).
- 22% reported having stopped work altogether because of their arthritis.

Managing arthritis with health professional care, medication and/or lifestyle changes

Professional care combined with self-management is the cornerstone of coping with arthritis

- Almost eight in ten Canadians with arthritis (77%) reported that they have seen or talked to a health professional about their arthritis in the past year
 - › Family doctors (66%) were most commonly consulted followed by pharmacists (22%) and physical/occupational therapists (18%).

Maintaining a healthy weight and engaging in regular physical activity are important for people with arthritis

- Just two in three Canadians with arthritis (65%) stated they received recommendations about lifestyle changes from a health care professional
 - › Health care professionals most often recommended physical activity/exercise (50%); controlling/losing weight (35%); and using an assistive device (15%).
- Only two in three Canadians with arthritis (63%) reported they engaged in exercise/physical activities and one in two (56%) stated they attempted to control/lose weight to manage their arthritis.

Ensuring that individuals with arthritis are both receiving the professional care they need and making the necessary lifestyle changes may help them to cope with their disease and optimize their health.

Assistive devices can help improve mobility

Devices or tools, such as splints or devices for walking, have been designed or adapted to help a person perform a particular task or activity.

- About four in ten Canadians with arthritis (44%) reported they used an assistive device to help with problems caused by arthritis.

Medication may be necessary to help manage pain and/or reduce inflammation

- Four of five Canadians with arthritis (79%) stated they used a medication to manage their arthritis in the past month: 39% took a prescription medication while 63% took a non-prescription medication.

Natural health products were also used by people with arthritis

- Four in ten Canadians with arthritis (40%) reported they used natural health products to help manage their arthritis.



- › While many Canadians with arthritis reported that they received enough information to help manage their arthritis, **one in five** did not.

Information on arthritis

Knowledge about arthritis is important for the early detection and management of this condition.

- Four in five Canadians with arthritis (82%) stated they received enough information to help them manage their arthritis. Information on the type of prescription medication for arthritis (45%) and the type of arthritis that they have (44%) was most commonly received.

While many individuals with arthritis reported that they received enough information about arthritis, one in five did not. Ensuring that everyone with arthritis has the information needed may help them to manage this chronic condition effectively.

Additional information on arthritis can be found online at:

- The Public Health Agency of Canada:
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/musculo/arthritis-arthrite-eng.php
- The Arthritis Society: www.arthritis.ca

More information about the 2009 Survey on Living with Chronic Disease in Canada can be found online at:

- Statistics Canada: www.statcan.gc.ca

Reference:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada. *Life with Arthritis in Canada: A personal and public health challenge*. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada: 2010 ISBN: 978-1-100-15986-7