



Jeb Bush  
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.  
Secretary, Department of Health

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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Friday, May 26, 2006

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Self-management is important*  
**May is arthritis awareness month**

Arthritis means “joint inflammation (*arth*=joint, *itis*=inflammation). It refers to more than 130 different diseases and conditions that affect joints and the tissues around the joints – such as muscles and tendons. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid, fibromyalgia, lupus, gout and scleroderma.

**Facts about arthritis:**

- Arthritis affects both men and women and is the **#1 cause of disability** in the United States.
- According to recent data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **almost three million Floridians of all ages are affected by arthritis.**
- 7 million adults say that arthritis limits their usual activities in some way.
- The risk of arthritis increases with age, and is more common in women than men.
- African-Americans/blacks with arthritis have more activity limitation than whites.

Early diagnosis and appropriate management of arthritis, including self-management activities, can help people with arthritis decrease disability and pain, improve function, stay productive and lower health care costs.

**Key self-management activities include the following:**

**See Your Doctor**—Although there is no cure for most types of arthritis, early diagnosis is important, especially for inflammatory types of arthritis. For example, early use of disease-modifying drugs can affect the course of rheumatoid arthritis. If you have symptoms of arthritis, see your doctor and begin appropriate management of your condition.

**(MORE)**



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**Be Active**—Research has shown that physical activity decreases pain, improves function, and delays disability. Make sure you get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least three days a week. You can get activity in 10-minute intervals.

**Watch Your Weight**—The risk of arthritis increases with increasing weight. Research suggests that maintaining a healthy weight reduces the risk of developing arthritis and may decrease progression of the disease.

**Protect Your Joints**—Joint injury can lead to osteoarthritis. People who experience sports or occupational injuries or have jobs with repetitive motions like repeated knee bending have more osteoarthritis. Avoid joint injury to reduce your risk of developing osteoarthritis.

**For more information about arthritis**, visit [www.cdc.gov/arthritis](http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis), [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org) or [www.doh.state.fl.us/family/arthritis](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/arthritis) or email [arthritis@doh.state.fl.us](mailto:arthritis@doh.state.fl.us).

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*The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.*  
[www.PinellasHealth.com](http://www.PinellasHealth.com)