



# HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET May 2008

## May is National Arthritis Awareness Month

### Overview:

Arthritis describes more than 100 different diseases and conditions that affect joints, tissues around the joint and other connective tissue. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 46 million Americans, nearly 1 in 5 adults in the U.S., have been diagnosed with some form of arthritis. The three most common types of the disease are osteoarthritis (OA), rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and fibromyalgia. OA and RA often affect joints in the hand, wrist, spine, hip, knee and foot. Other well-known forms of arthritis include gout, childhood arthritis, lupus (or SLE), bursitis/tendonitis and Lyme disease. Arthritis is one of the most prevalent chronic health problems and

the nation's leading cause of disability among Americans over age 15. Arthritis is the leading disability among workers in NJ, affecting approximately 5% of working-age adults. In 2003, the disease represented a large financial burden resulting from hospitalizations, physician visits and prescription drug costs that amounted to \$128 billion nationally, and more than \$3.5 billion in NJ. Today, almost half of people with arthritis are under age 65, and nearly 70% are women. As the population ages, it is believed that 40% of American adults will suffer from some form of arthritic disease by the year 2030.

### New Jersey Facts:

- In 2007, approximately 27% of NJ adults (1.8 million residents) were estimated to have been diagnosed with some form of arthritis. By 2030, statewide arthritis prevalence is predicted to rise to 39%.
- A 2001-2004 CDC study estimates that 8,600 NJ children age 18 years and younger suffer from Juvenile Arthritis.
- Arthritis prevalence is 32% among women and 21% among men in NJ. (Figure 1)
- Age-adjusted prevalence estimates for arthritis in NJ are fairly similar among whites (26.4%), blacks (23.7%), and Hispanics/Latinos (23.3%). Arthritis prevalence among Asians (6.9%) is much lower as compared to the other groups. (Figure 2)
- The 2000 NJ Behavioral Risk Factor Survey estimates almost half (47%) of residents diagnosed with arthritis do not know what type of arthritis they have.
- In 2001, among the NJ adults with diagnosed arthritis, slightly more than one third (34%) reported currently being treated by a doctor for their condition.

Figure 1. Arthritis prevalence by gender, US and NJ, 2007

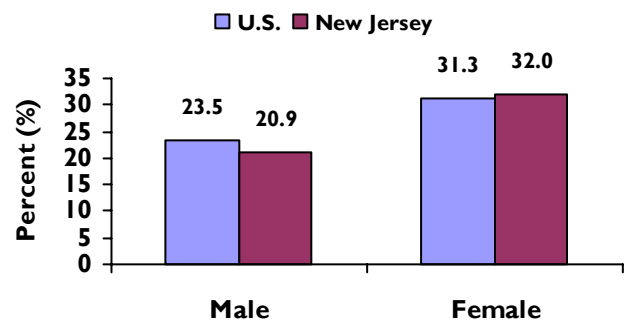
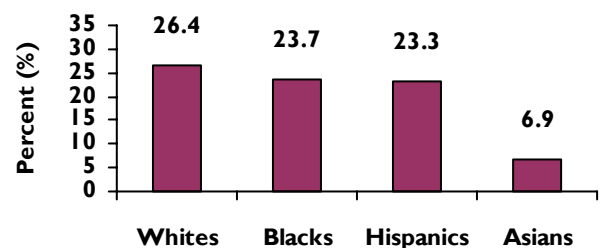
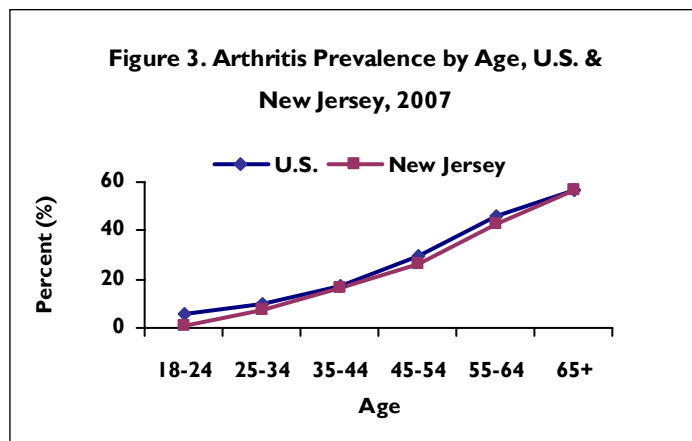


Figure 2. Arthritis prevalence by race/ethnicity, NJ adults 18+, 2007



- Arthritis prevalence increases with age. Among adults aged 65 years and older in NJ, 56% suffer from arthritis. (Figure 3)
- Arthritis has a negative impact on the health related quality of life of New Jerseyans. The percentage of adults who described their health status as fair or poor is about 23% among people with diagnosed arthritis compared to about 11% among those without the disease.



### Treatment and Prevention:

Most arthritic conditions are clinically diagnosed using the patient’s history, physical examination, and selected, supportive radiographic and laboratory studies. Early diagnosis is key to combating arthritis: the Arthritis Foundation recommends seeing a physician if signs or symptoms of arthritis are present for more than 2 weeks. Warning signs include: joint pain, stiffness, swelling or difficulty moving a joint.

The focus of treatment for arthritis is to control pain, minimize joint damage, and improve or

maintain function and quality of life. According to the American College of Rheumatology, treatment might involve medication or physical or occupational therapy, splints or joint assistive aids, patient education and support, weight loss and/or surgery.

Recent research advances have provided individuals with many new options to improve arthritis symptoms and prevent disease progression. For a listing of clinical trials available in New Jersey for persons with arthritis and related conditions, visit [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov).

### Resources:

- To assist the more than 1.8 million New Jersey residents affected by arthritis, the New Jersey chapter of the Arthritis Foundation offers a variety of local resources and programs. For more information about exercise classes, support groups, free educational materials, as well as a listing of physicians who specialize in diagnosing and treating arthritis, visit the foundation web site at [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org).
- For more information on arthritis prevention, diagnosis and treatment visit the [CaregiverNJ](http://www.CaregiverNJ.com) website.

### Sources:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services,  
 Center for Health Statistics: [“Arthritis in New Jersey”](#);  
[New Jersey Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, unpublished data](#)  
[National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases](#)  
[The American College of Rheumatology](#)

[The Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[The Arthritis Foundation](#)  
 Helmick, C.G., et al. (2008) Estimates of the Prevalence of Arthritis and Other Rheumatic Conditions in the United States. *Arthritis & Rheumatism*, 58 (1), 15-25

CaregiverNJ: <http://www.state.nj.us/caregivernj/basic/health&wellness/arthritis.shtml>



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