

For Immediate Release

Contact: Carol Galbreath
Arthritis Foundation
404-965-7595
cgalbreath@arthritis.org

WALK AWAY FROM ARTHRITIS

Act Now to Improve Quality of Life and Limit Future Disability

Atlanta, GA –May 1, 2007 – It’s no secret walking is simple, inexpensive and one of the best forms of physical activity for overall health and well-being. But for 46 million adults with arthritis and many more at risk, walking is crucial to preventing and managing the nation’s leading cause of disability. In fact, the Arthritis Foundation says Americans cannot afford *not* to get moving.

This year alone, nearly a million people will be diagnosed with arthritis. These numbers will continue to skyrocket over the next two decades as the population ages. In addition to causing pain, disability and loss of independence, arthritis exacts a hefty financial toll on the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that arthritis costs the U.S. economy \$128 billion annually.

“Obesity in this country is at an all-time high, putting millions at risk for disabling arthritis,” said Patience White, M.D., chief public health officer, Arthritis Foundation. “Coupled with sedentary lifestyles and an aging baby boomer population, we are facing a public health crisis if Americans don’t take action now.”

Walking can help achieve and maintain a healthy weight and reduce the risk of arthritis. Losing just 10 pounds relieves 40 pounds of pressure on knees, and losing as little as 11 pounds may reduce joint pain and help prevent knee osteoarthritis. For those already living with arthritis symptoms, losing 15 pounds can cut knee pain in half.

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“Walking is one of the easiest, safest and most beneficial forms of physical activity for most people, and a little effort goes a long way,” said White. “Walking as little as 30 minutes – even 10 minutes three times a day – can ease joint pain, improve mobility and reduce fatigue.”

May is National Arthritis Month and the Arthritis Foundation says there’s no better time to take action. For a free copy of the Arthritis Foundation’s brochure, “Walking and Arthritis,” including tips on getting started, staying injury-free and keeping it fun, call 800-568-4045 or visit www.arthritis.org.

To get Americans moving, the Arthritis Foundation created the Arthritis Walk®, an annual walk event to educate Americans about the health benefits of walking while raising critical funds to fight arthritis. To sign up for Arthritis Walk events, visit www.arthritis.org

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation is the leading health organization addressing the needs of some 46 million Americans living with arthritis, the nation’s number-one cause of disability. Founded in 1948, with headquarters in Atlanta, the Arthritis Foundation has multiple service points located throughout the country.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$380 million in research grants since 1948. The foundation helps individuals take control of arthritis by providing public health education; pursuing public policy and legislation; and conducting evidence-based programs to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis. Information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-568-4045 or www.arthritis.org.

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