

Community Connections

Arthritis Champion – Donna Amos

Champions display strength and perseverance in their journey, and Donna Amos embodies that spirit. Most days, you can find Donna poolside wearing one of her trademark colorful visors and leading fellow champions in aquatic exercise classes. Donna knows the benefits of exercise because she's battled rheumatoid arthritis for 38 years.

Her arthritis journey started in college when her right knee and hand swelled and normal activities quickly became painful. At the time, with few medications available, Donna's doctor sent her home to rest. But fatigue and depression quickly set in. "I remember calling my mother at work crying and in pain," Donna says. "She told me to put on my swimsuit and get my brother to help me get in a warm bath."

Putting on that swimsuit was a catalyst for Donna to live an active and fulfilled life with arthritis and to help others ease the pain. Donna credits the Arthritis Foundation for inspiring her to educate and inspire others struggling with coming to terms with this disease. "I began volunteering to represent the Arthritis Foundation at local health fairs.

I wondered what else I could do within my abilities," Donna says.

She soon became trained to lead others in exercise and was eventually certified to lead the Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program. Sixteen years and several joint replacement surgeries later, Donna is still at it. She is a believer in the ability of exercise to maintain a healthy quality of life. "So many have attended my classes and had great success in maintaining their independence. Once they start, they don't want to stop because they realize the great benefits," Donna says. Motivated by the progress she sees in her students, she has no intention of slowing down.

Donna is a true arthritis champion, and we thank her for her dedication and services to the arthritis community.



"The Arthritis Foundation has allowed me to serve others, educate them and make many forever friends along the way. So very blessed!"

— Donna Amos



Biosimilars vs Biologics: Do you know the difference?

Taking control of your health means knowing all your options. Health insurance, doctors, diet — it can all be too much to handle, and the science of arthritis can be especially daunting. The Arthritis Foundation often gets questions about treatments such as biosimilars. Are they effective? Are they safe? Are they less expensive? These are all important questions, and the answer is: it's complicated.

We'll start with biologics. They help slow or stop the over-active inflammation that damages joints and organs in autoimmune diseases, like rheumatoid, juvenile and psoriatic arthritis. Biologics are complex drugs made with living cells or proteins. They target parts of the immune system that fuel inflammation. Examples of biologics include Humira and Enbrel.

What are biosimilars?

Biosimilars are similar, but not identical, to their "reference" biologics. Because biologic products are made from living proteins, it's impossible to copy them exactly. But biosimilars are essentially the same. They work the same way and have the same side effects as their reference drugs. And drugmakers must prove they're as safe and effective as the original.

In 2010, Congress allowed the FDA to approve biosimilars on an abbreviated licensure pathway. The testing data must have no clinically meaningful differences. The shorter pathway demonstrates the similarity to the reference biologic. It is not to establish the safety or effectiveness of the biologic, which has already been successfully approved by the FDA.

Are biosimilars safe?

Biosimilars must meet the same safety standards as their referenced products. Because biosimilars and biologics act on the immune system, they may raise the risks for other, potentially serious conditions. It's important to know that an autoimmune disease makes people with

The Arthritis Foundation is a resource that can answer your questions and help with your concerns. **Reach out to our Helpline at 800-283-7800.**

arthritis more vulnerable to conditions like infection, lung or heart disease or cancer.

Are biosimilars less expensive?

The development of biosimilars is faster, comes to market quicker and improves options for patients, including potentially lower costs. Ask your doctor about patient assistance programs and other ways to help cover costs.

Does health insurance cover biosimilars?

Every insurance plan is different, and some may require step therapy and start you on conventional drugs first before moving to a biologic. Review your health plan options carefully, and ask about which biosimilars are available and how much it will cost you out-of-pocket.

What do I do now?

Ask your health care provider about concerns you may have, such as the safety and efficacy of switching from a reference product to its biosimilar.





Exploring the Frontiers of Arthritis Management

The Arthritis Foundation is proud to support some of the most leading-edge trials, studies and breakthroughs as we work to conquer arthritis.

Learning from the space between joints

Three major universities are collaborating in a unique study to earlier detect osteoarthritis caused by joint injuries. Using 3D width mapping, they are computing joint alignment and spacing after surgery to determine how early changes in the space between joints correlates with later development of arthritis.

Reimagining medication, metabolism and how we walk

What if a common asthma and allergy drug could help prevent arthritis? As part of a study on combating arthritis development after ligament reconstruction, researchers in an ongoing clinical trial are rethinking the use of a powerful anti-inflammatory to target this risk and improve post-surgical therapy.

The PIKASO Project

We're supporting the PIKASO (Post-Injury Knee Arthritis Severity Outcomes) clinical trial. With the most advanced imaging technology and measurements, the effects of pain medication and other therapies will show doctors how to deliver functional improvements.

Note From Steven



Arthritis Foundation supporters are like no other. I was honored to be a part of my first California Coast Classic and ride with 250+ cyclists from San Francisco to Los Angeles along the beautiful Pacific Coast Highway. I was thrilled to see the support of so many volunteers and friends who showed up to cheer us on.

As a loyal friend of the Arthritis Foundation, you make so much happen, as you'll read in this edition of community connections. Your support is funding research, passing laws on capping medication costs and encouraging arthritis champions around the country.

Thank you for all you do for the Arthritis Foundation.

Steven Taylor
President & CEO



Steven Taylor at the 22nd Annual California Coast Classic

How to Hire the Right Caregiver

Get help with physical and psychological needs at home using these dos and don'ts for choosing the right caregiver.

- ▶ **DO** write a detailed job description
- ▶ **DO** check references
- ▶ **DO** get everything in writing
- ▶ **DON'T** be afraid to find someone else

Learn more at [arthritis.org/community](https://www.arthritis.org/community).

Choose monthly giving

By making a generous monthly gift, you provide dependable support to help us continue our search to end arthritis.



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Walk to make an impact.

Join arthritis champions, friends and family to walk together to fund research and find a cure. Walks are taking place all over the country; register or donate at [arthritis.org/events](https://www.arthritis.org/events).

