

Medication Most Commonly Seen As an Effective Way to Alleviate Arthritic Pain

While Many Feel that Physical Activity Can Reduce Arthritis Symptoms, Some Worry that it May Worsen Pain



Ipsos Reid

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Toronto, ON – Nine in ten respondents (87%) believe that medications are effective in reducing arthritic pain according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of The Arthritis Society. While respondents are more likely to find medications to be as effective treatment, at least three quarters also say that physiotherapy (79%), physical activity (78%), applying heat or cold (76%), joint replacement therapy (76%) and massage (75%) are effective in reducing arthritis pain. Nearly two thirds also find complementary therapies to be a useful treatment.

- Women (81%), those with at least some post-secondary education (82%), Albertans (85%), and those with an income of at least \$30,000 (81%) are among the most likely to view physical activity as an effective way of reducing arthritis pain.
- Of those with arthritis, 72% were likely to believe that physical activity can alleviate arthritic pain. Contrastingly, 79% of those without this condition felt this way.

The vast majority of the population also thought that physical activity played an important role in alleviating symptoms associated with chronic diseases. Nine in ten believe that physical activity played a role in alleviating symptoms associated with heart disease (96%), high blood pressure (92%), stroke (90%) and diabetes (89%). Nearly as many (84%) say that



physical activity is important (26% very important, 48% somewhat) in improving arthritis symptoms, though fewer (65%) say so of alleviating symptoms associated with cancer.

- Those who have been recently diagnosed with Arthritis are more likely than those who have not been diagnosed to say that physical activity is *very* important in improving their symptoms (43% vs. 35%).

At the same time, nearly half of Canadians (46%) feel that physical activity can aggravate arthritis symptoms. Those suffering from arthritis are even more likely to think so (61%). Other activities that may exacerbate joint pain and inflammation include alcohol consumption (48% of Canadians, 43% of arthritis sufferers) and smoking (47% and 43%, respectively). Few believe that physical intimacy may worsen arthritis symptoms (12% of Canadians, 20% of sufferers).

Arthritis is a relatively common condition, with 15% of Canadians saying that they have been diagnosed with the condition in the past three years, though more have been recently diagnosed with high blood pressure (19%).

- Arthritis diagnoses are most prevalent among those aged 55 and older (24%) than among those who are younger (10%).

Less commonly diagnosed conditions include diabetes (8%), heart disease (4%), cancer (2%), or a stroke (1%). Seven in ten Canadians (68%) say that they have not been diagnosed with any of these conditions in the past three years.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted from 6 -13 July, 2009. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,002 adults across Canada was interviewed online.

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a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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