# 1 in 5 Latinos Report Significant Joint Pain

In a first-of-its-kind study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found that when Latinos have arthritis, the disease is more likely to cause them severe joint pain and limit their activities. Here, we look at what arthritis is, what researchers found and what you can do to keep moving.

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**What is arthritis?**

Arthritis is the most common cause of disability in the United States, affecting more than 20 million people nationwide. The disease is an inflammation of one or more of your joints, resulting in pain, stiffness, swelling and reduced range of motion. The two most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Osteoarthritis is caused by the normal wear and tear of daily motions that damage the cartilage and result in bone grinding against bone. Rheumatoid arthritis is caused by autoimmune disorders—the body's own immune system attacks joints and causes swelling and pain and eventually destroys cartilage in the bone and joints.

While anyone can get arthritis, there are a few risk factors. First, you family's health history. You may be more likely to develop a certain type of arthritis if your parents or siblings have the disorder. Second, age. The risk of many types of arthritis, including osteoarthritis, increases with age. Next, gender. Women are more likely than men to develop rheumatoid arthritis. Finally, obesity and any previous injuries. People who have been injured a lot or are carrying excess weight (and thereby stressing out joints) have a higher risk of developing arthritis.

Arthritis treatment focuses on relieving the painful symptoms while at the same time improving joint function. Treatment includes nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) to reduce pain and inflammation, corticosteroids to reduce inflammation while also suppressing the immune system, and physical therapy and exercise to improve the range of motion and strengthen the muscles surrounding joints.

**What did the CDC find?**

More than 3 million Latinos living in the United States are struggling with arthritis, and at least one in five are reporting significant joint pain that is limiting their activities. In a study published in the

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, the CDC found that Latinos disproportionately carry the burden of impaired living. In fact, the study showed that Latinos and African Americans were 1.3 times more likely to have activity limitations compared with white peers, 1.6 times more likely to have work limitations and 1.9 times more likely to have severe joint pain.

Among Latino populations, the CDC found that Puerto Ricans reported the highest prevalence of arthritis (22 percent) and that Cubans and Cuban Americans reported the lowest (17 percent). The study also found that Mexicans reported the highest work limitations and Puerto Ricans reported the most join pain.

**How can you prevent and manage arthritis?**

First, maintain a healthy weight and get regular exercise. The extra pounds add unnecessary weight to your bones, a stress that your body doesn't need. For every pound you lose, four pounds of pressure are taken off the knees. And low impact exercises (like walking) have been proved to strengthen muscles, reduce pain and delay common arthritis-related disabilities.

Next, see your doctors. As a group, Latinos are less likely to use surgical or medical interventions and are more likely to rely on home or faith-based remedies. But it is important to see a doctor—early diagnosis can go a long way to manage and prevent any activity limitations.

For more information on arthritis, how to manage it and how to treat it (including Spanish-language resources), click here.

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http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/Arthritis-Latinos-Health-21484-5563