

Appendix F



For Immediate Release:
Wednesday, October 26, 2016

Media Contact:
Rebecca Castleton
801-538-9340
rcastlet@utah.gov

News Release

Exercise as a Tool to Treat Severe Joint Pain

CDC recommends exercise, not opioids, as way to reduce pain

(Salt Lake City, UT) – What if there was a safe way to reduce joint pain without the dangerous side effects of opioids? A report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows there is insufficient evidence for and serious risks associated with long-term use of opioids for treating arthritis. Instead, experts recommend low-impact physical activity such as walking, biking, or swimming to help alleviate joint pain.

Nationally, 27.2% of adults with doctor-diagnosed arthritis report severe joint pain, a condition that can limit a person's ability to perform basic tasks. Severe joint pain was higher among those with diabetes, obesity, heart disease, fair or poor health, and serious psychological distress.

“Given the burden of severe joint pain, and that in 2015 roughly one in five Utahns reported they had arthritis, we recommend two hours and thirty minutes of moderate physical activity each week to help reduce pain, fatigue, and stiffness,” said Nichole Shepard, manager of the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Arthritis Program.

“Medications can help, but there may be dangerous side effects from taking opioids long-term, including the risk of dependency, addiction, or even death.”

For those concerned about safely increasing physical activity without worsening their joint pain, community-based programs, such as EnhanceFitness, are available.

EnhanceFitness is an hour-long program being offered at senior centers throughout Salt

– **MORE** –

Page 2 of 2 – Exercise as a Tool to Treat Severe Joint Pain

Lake County. The program is taught by certified instructors and provides a fun, relaxed, and safe way to get a great workout.

Lorie Finlayson, age 79 of Draper, was struggling from joint pain after a series of surgeries that left her in crutches. She started attending EnhanceFitness and saw major improvements physically, mentally, and socially. "I loved the music, the instructors, the interaction with others, and I could do the classes. That did so much to help me feel good about myself and my abilities. Three years later I'm still a regular at EnhanceFitness."

Another EnhanceFitness regular, Joyce Jackson, 85 of Murray, mentioned her reluctance to rely on medication for relief from her hand and back pain. "Then I started exercising and saw so much improvement," said Jackson about her experience. "I will be the first to say to anyone to get up and move."

"Utah is very active and our rates of arthritis are low compared to other states," said Shepard. "However, we want people who already have joint pain to know that there are safe and effective classes to help get you back moving and reduce pain."

In addition to exercise therapies, the CDC also recommends the use of cognitive behavioral therapy, certain interventional procedures, acetaminophen, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for the treatment of arthritis and severe joint pain.

A list of classes designed to lesson joint pain and help manage arthritis can be found at <http://livingwell.utah.gov> or by calling the Utah Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542. To download a copy of the CDC report, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6539a2.htm>.

###

The mission of the Utah Department of Health and Utah's local health departments is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.