

Women's Health

Arthritis Is Primarily A Women's Health Concern

(NAPSA)—An estimated one in three adults—70 million Americans—has arthritis, but what is not well understood is that arthritis strikes many more women than men. This is true for many forms of arthritis, including osteoarthritis, the most common type.

In response to this ever-growing problem, a leading women's health organization is now taking action to help the 41 million women arthritis sufferers in this country fight back. The Society for Women's Health Research has joined forces with actress, dancer and arthritis sufferer Debbie Allen to launch "Living Well With Arthritis," a public education campaign designed to teach women how to alleviate their arthritis pain and continue leading their active lives.

The Society decided to take this step after a new survey revealed how little people know about arthritis and the best ways to treat it. The survey found that:

- Less than half of the public (46 percent) says they are familiar with arthritis symptoms.
- Two-thirds (64 percent) believe arthritis affects men and women equally; in fact, 60 percent of those affected are women.
- 40 percent do not know what the typical first-line arthritis pain treatment is.

The survey also found that even those with the disease (40 percent of those polled) have very little understanding of what medical experts recommend for treating arthritis pain. To change this situation, the campaign is promoting the recommendations of two organizations—the American College of Rheumatology and the American Pain Society—which recommend starting with exercise and weight loss in combination with the simple over-the-counter pain reliever, acetaminophen, the medicine found



Allen, actress, dancer and arthritis sufferer, is teaching women how to "live well" with arthritis.

in Tylenol Arthritis Pain.

"For mild to moderate arthritis, guidelines say the best initial therapy is acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol Arthritis Pain," said Deborah S. Litman, M.D., of the American College of Rheumatology. "This is because acetaminophen, when used as directed, has an unsurpassed safety profile, is low in cost, and has great efficacy in treating arthritis pain."

The campaign also stresses the importance of taking arthritis medicines correctly when combining them with other OTC or prescription medicines. Towards this end, Debbie Allen is appearing in a television public service announcement sponsored by the Society for Women's Health Research that urges the public to talk to their doctor about which combinations of prescription and OTC medicines are right for them.

"The need to mobilize Americans to learn about and treat their arthritis pain has never been greater," said Phyllis Greenberger, president of the Society. "We are dedicated to helping women live better and healthier."

For more information about the campaign or how to diagnose and treat arthritis symptoms effectively, visit www.womenshealthresearch.org.