

Addressing Chronic Disease Through Lunchtime Physical Activity



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

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ISSUE



Chronic disease is the leading causes of death and disability in the United States.



Many are caused by risk behaviors, including **lack of physical activity**.



But arthritis affects about 1/4 of the adult population in Delaware, making physical activity difficult.

RESPONSE

2021 Walk With Ease includes

- live virtual education sessions
- self-directed physical activity
- weekly guidebook readings
- email support
- additional resources

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Reduce the pain and discomfort of arthritis

2



Increase balance, strength and walking pace

3



Build confidence in one's ability to be physically active

4



Improve overall health

IMPACT



2021 Walk With Ease program participants



100% were physically active at least 11–30 minutes 3+ days per week



86% felt confident in maintaining or increasing physical activity



80% increased understanding of the benefits of exercise for people with arthritis and chronic disease



100% plan to continue their new physical activity routine



80% stated the Walk With Ease helped or supported their efforts to be active



80% would recommend Walk With Ease

ISSUE

Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Many chronic diseases are caused by a shortlist of risk behaviors, including lack of physical activity. According to the Delaware Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, about one-fourth of the adult population in Delaware reports having been diagnosed with arthritis. The prevalence of arthritis increases with age: about 25 percent of 45 to 54 year-olds reported having arthritis and the prevalence increased to just over 36 percent among 55 to 64-year-olds and just over 47 percent among those aged 65 and older. Of Delaware adults diagnosed with arthritis, around 13 percent reported that arthritis limited their activities, more than nine percent stated arthritis limited their ability to work and more than five percent stated their arthritis limited their social activities.

Hypertension and high blood cholesterol, both of which affect more than a third of the state's adult population, are the most prevalent chronic conditions. In 2017, 34.9 percent of Delaware residents aged 18 and older reported they had been told by a health care professional that they have high blood pressure. Additionally, more than 34 percent of Delaware adults reported they had been diagnosed with high blood cholesterol.

RESPONSE

The Walk With Ease program is an evidence-based fitness program sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation.

The Walk With Ease is proven to:

- Reduce the pain and discomfort of arthritis
- Increase balance, strength and walking pace
- Build confidence in one's ability to be physically active
- Improve overall health

For six weeks, participants joined live virtual education sessions once per week during their lunch break and participated in self-directed physical activity at least three times per week when it was convenient for them. In addition, weekly guidebook reading assignments, email support and additional resources are provided.

IMPACT

2021 Walk With Ease program participants reported:

- 100% were physically active for at least 11 to 30 minutes three or more days per week
 - 96% felt that maintaining or increasing their physical activity was important
 - 86% felt confident in maintaining or increasing their physical activity
 - 80% increased their understanding of the benefits of exercise for people with arthritis and chronic disease, as well as their knowledge about physical activity and walking
 - 100% plan to continue their physical activity routine as a result of the Walk With Ease Program
 - 80% stated the Walk With Ease helped or supported their efforts to be physically active
 - 80% stated they would recommend Walk With Ease to a friend, family member or co-worker
 - 100% stated they used the Walk With Ease participant guidebook
 - 80% stated they will use the participant guidebook, emails or handouts in the future
 - 100% stated they were happy with the program length
 - 80% were happy with the Walk With Ease program overall
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RECOGNITION

The Walk With Ease (WWE) program is partially funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed).

PUBLIC VALUE STATEMENT

The Walk With Ease program provides Delawareans the knowledge and support they need to begin and maintain a cost-effective, basic fitness program. This is also a wonderful program for employers to offer their employees!

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