



June 2011



Arthritis - Up and Able to Work

A growing number of workers in the U.S. must contend with the day-to-day challenges of arthritis. It's the most common cause of disability in America and afflicts nearly 19 million adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Feeling better. Here are the best ways to ease painful joints and gain more control of arthritis both on and off the job:

- Work with your health care provider.** Discuss medications, alternative therapies, and non-drug treatments that can help manage your arthritis.
- Lose excess weight.** Gradually shedding extra pounds can significantly reduce stress on your joints. For example, losing just 11 pounds can reduce the risk of knee osteoarthritis.
- Exercise daily.** Appropriate physical activity can reduce the pain and progression of arthritis. First, consult your provided about the type and amount of exercise that's safe for you. Consider pool exercises; the water supports you and takes the weight off your joints.
- Change positions.** To prevent stiffness and pain at work, vary your position every 20 minutes. Once an hour, stretch out or walk around.
- Use joint aids.** Explore devices designed to ease arthritis symptoms - tools with padded grips, braces, canes, orthotics, splints, electric equipment and adjustable furniture.



City Events

Deferred Comp: Social Security & Retirement Investing

Tuesday, June 7
12 noon - 1:00 pm Webinar
Registration Required - 206-447-1924

Quitting Tobacco

Wednesday, June 8
12 noon - 1:00 pm Webinar
Click [Join the meeting](#) for video presentation. Audio Information: 866-910-7420; Participant code: 7037028

Deferred Comp: Wise Investing

Thursday, June 9
12 noon - 12:45 pm SMT 4080

Elder Care - Where Do I Begin?

Thursday, June 9
12 noon - 1:00 pm Webinar
Registration Required - TBA

Advanced Directives & Living Wills

Tuesday, June 14
12 noon - 1:00 pm SMT 4050

Thursday, June 23
12 noon - 1:00 pm SMT 4050

Monthly Blood Pressure Screening

Wednesday, June 29
Stop by between
10:30 am - 1:30 pm SMT 4096

Deferred Comp: Calculate Your Total Retirement

Wednesday, June 29
12 noon - 12:45 pm SMT 4020
Registration Required - 206-447-1924



4 Facts About Backache

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

FACT: Back pain can often be avoided. Common back pain is triggered by several factors, including lack of fitness. Regular physical activity is one of the best steps you can take to protect your

back. Back-friendly activities includes walking, swimming, Pilates, yoga and tai chi; if you have back problems, check with your provider before starting any of these activities.

FACT: Poor posture can cause back pain. Proper body mechanics are important for reducing your risk. For example, use a lumbar support while sitting to reduce strain, or get up and move about to break muscle tension; place a stool under one foot at a time while standing for long periods. Learn how to lift objects correctly and ask for help lifting heavy or awkward objects.

FACT: Back rehabilitation studies show a medium-firm mattress might be better for your back than a firm one. Bedtime ergonomic tips: If you have back pain, try lying on your side in a curled position with a pillow between your legs. If you are prone to backache and sleep on your back, place a pillow or rolled towel under your knees to relieve the pressure from arching your back. Use a pillow that won't angle your neck but helps keep neck and spine aligned.

FACT: Stress can cause back pain. Stress typically produces muscle tension, triggering flare-ups of pain related to back problems. Meditation, deep breathing and relaxation exercises can help relieve stress, improve sleep and reduce back pain.



Mammography Screening

July 25—29

Save the dates...and look for details in the July *Take Charge!*



News and Notes

❑ Washington Dental Service

WDS is reducing fees paid to dentists effective June 15. See frequently asked questions at: personnelweb/benefits/home.aspx

❑ Weight Watchers

Get special savings on selected weight loss programs - available to City employees and covered dependents age 18 and over with City medical coverage. Call 1-866-442-1232 to enroll.

❑ Flexible Spending Account

Reminder to review your account, upload claims directly, upload requested receipts and update personal information through the web at Baclink.com. Your Employee ID is your work employee ID number with a zero in front to make it 9 digits long. Your Employer ID is BAC007516.

General Information

Take Charge! is a general guide to healthy benefits and behavior. Contact your health care professional with your specific health care concerns.