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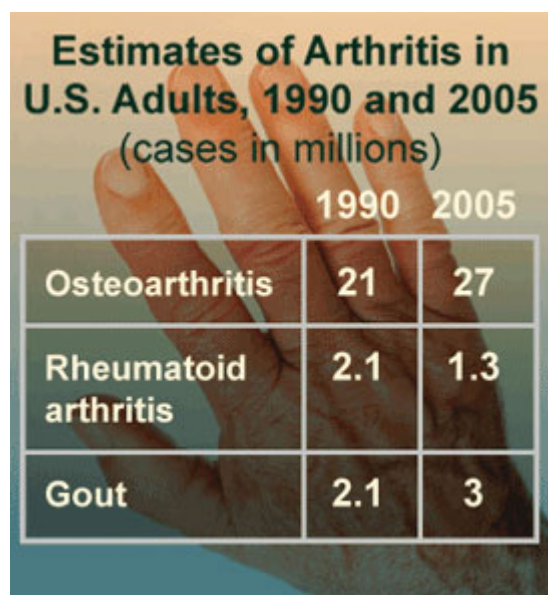
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# Estimates for Specific Forms of Arthritis

**More adults are developing arthritis: physical activity and learning to self-manage arthritis can help reduce joint pain.**



**Estimates of Arthritis in U.S. Adults, 1990 and 2005**  
(cases in millions)

	1990	2005
Osteoarthritis	21	27
Rheumatoid arthritis	2.1	1.3
Gout	2.1	3

We are often asked how many people have a specific type of arthritis, of which there are more than 100. That is too difficult to answer for most types at the moment, but CDC worked with the National Arthritis Data Workgroup (NADW) to provide the best available estimates for a few types. The effort focused on making estimates for 2005, and was published in 2008. A brief summary is given below.

Nearly 1 in 5 US adults—46 million people—have arthritis, the nation's most common cause of disability, which continues to be a large and growing public health problem. By the year 2030, an estimated 67 million people will be affected by arthritis, according to the study published in the January issue of *Arthritis & Rheumatism*. The study used published research to estimate the number of people affected by arthritis, which comprises more than 100 diseases and conditions that affect the joints, in 2005. This

research included analyses from national surveys (e.g., the National Health Interview Survey) and from some smaller studies as well. The prevalence of osteoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis, increased to 27 million people, up from the previous estimate of 21 million.

Other key findings include the following:

- Rheumatoid arthritis, which can lead to chronic pain, loss of joint function, and deformity, is decreasing, with 1.3 million adults affected, down from 2.1 million in 1990—in part due to more restrictive classification criteria but also because of a real drop in prevalence.
- Gout, a form of arthritis most common among men, affected approximately 3 million adults, up from 2.1 million in 1990.

"The prevalence of arthritis overall continues to grow in the United States, which is not surprising given that many of the specific conditions are age related and the general population is aging," said Charles G. Helmick, MD, a CDC epidemiologist and a lead author on the study. "The increases in some of the more common types of arthritis suggest that they will have a growing impact on the health care and public health systems and more efforts should be made to promote underused but effective interventions and programs that could reduce that impact," he said. "These include getting educated about managing your arthritis through the Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program and the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, and getting more physically active through the Arthritis Foundation Exercise or Aquatics Programs."

Editor's Note: Some prevalence estimates are based on a few old or small studies of uncertain generalizability to the US population. This is the case for lupus, which affected an estimated 161,000 to 322,000 adults, according to the study. This is a conservative estimate, and CDC-funded lupus registries in Georgia and Michigan are currently underway to better define the impact of the condition.