

Campaign Fact Sheet:



What is Hand in Hand for RA?

Hand In Hand for RA is a call-to-action for people living with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) to join a national movement of public service and “giving back.”

The campaign is sponsored by Genentech, Biogen Idec and grassroots advocacy organization CreakyJoints.

Why This Campaign?

Public service in the United States is on the verge of becoming a national movement. From September 2007 to September 2008, more than 25 percent of the U.S. population volunteered for or through an organization at least once.

- Recent research into the benefits of public service has found a connection between volunteering and good health.
- Additionally, for those with RA who are managing symptoms and are comfortable participating in physical activities, research has shown that for people with mild to moderate RA, being physically active can help to maintain joint mobility and make joint muscles stronger.

Hand in Hand with RA will help empower those with RA to find volunteer opportunities that are right for them. While there are a many available resources to help people with RA deal with their symptoms, there are not many programs developed to harness their desire to give back.

About the Survey

A newly released survey found that more than two-thirds (72%) of people with RA are looking for ways to do more. RA is a debilitating autoimmune disease that can lead to joint damage and painful chronic inflammation. The disease affects an estimated 1.3 million Americans, or an estimated 1 to 2% of the world’s population, and can impact daily activities, often leaving people with RA feeling limited in what they can do.

According to those polled, the symptoms of RA such as joint pain, stiffness and fatigue get in the way of activities they would otherwise enjoy. Of those surveyed, 81% said they wish they could do more independently rather than rely on others, and 40% said they want to give back through volunteering or public service to prove that they are *not* limited by their RA.

In addition to showing that people with RA want to give back, other survey findings included:

- 97% say their RA symptoms often or sometimes limit them from participating in activities they would otherwise enjoy
- 63% report that having RA makes them feel dependent on others
 - Half need help everyday to physically manage the tasks of daily living
- 48% report that they were more active in their community before they were diagnosed with RA
- Nearly half (42%) are unaware of new research suggesting a connection between volunteering and health benefits

About the Survey, Continued

These findings are based on an online survey conducted by Yankelovich, Inc. doing business as The Futures Company, between July 29 and Aug. 3, 2009 among a sample of 501 men and women who have been diagnosed with RA.

What Types of Things can People with RA Do?

Doctors and therapists recommend moderate physical activity for people with RA to

- improve health without hurting joints;
- help increase joint flexibility and range of motion; and
- maintain muscle strength.

Based on their physical abilities, a person living with RA can consider a variety of activities including those that are low, medium or high impact. Before starting on a new physical activity, people with RA are encouraged to talk with their health care providers about what activities would be most appropriate for them.

How Does Someone Get Involved?

www.handinhandforRA.com provides information for people with RA to learn more about the campaign, including:

- A motivating message from CreakyJoints
- An opportunity for people with RA to share their volunteer stories and post photos
- Helpful tips on how to get involved and where to start
- Stories from other volunteers with RA
- RA disease information

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