



Media release

For immediate release

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Join your neighbours for a walk!

Arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions such as osteoarthritis are painful conditions that can cause reduced quality of life at work and at home. Healthy eating and regular exercise, especially walking, helps to prevent chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and musculoskeletal conditions such as arthritis and osteoarthritis. Walking is also a great way to meet new people in your neighbourhood, and have fun at the same time.

Neighbourhood Walk

To promote messages around healthy lifestyles including healthy eating and regular physical activity, the State Government's Department of Health has provided funding to Arthritis Victoria to establish links with the East Reservoir Neighbourhood Renewal Project. Together they have set up a weekly **Neighbourhood Walk** around Kirkwood Reserve. The walk has already proved very popular with local residents. The walking group is now welcoming new participants who would like to join in.

Zanne Kawalsky, a health educator at Arthritis Victoria explains how the **Neighbourhood Walks** work.

"The group meets at the Reservoir Neighbourhood House each Wednesday. Participants discuss how they can have a healthier lifestyle while walking around Kirkwood Reserve for about an hour. The walk is arranged so that each person can go at their own pace. You don't have to walk for the whole time," says Zanne. "There are lots of places to rest along the way. It takes time to get fit, so a neighbourhood walk is the ideal way to start becoming more active – and meet your neighbours at the same time. Anyone living in the East Reservoir/Darebin area is welcome."

When?	Every Wednesday at 10am. The walk starts at 10.15am and finishes at 11.15am.
Where?	Reservoir Neighbourhood House, 2B Cuthbert Street, Reservoir
How much?	Free
What to wear?	Wear comfortable shoes. Bring a hat or jacket depending on the weather.
Find out more	Zanne Kawalsky, Arthritis Victoria – phone 8531 8047, email zanne@arthritisvic.org.au

Ends/...

Media contact

Sue Montague, Communications Manager, Arthritis Victoria, phone 03 8531 8024, mobile 0422 794 885, email sue.montague@arthritisvic.org.au

Notes to editor

The Health Burden

- Estimates from the 2006 *Population Health Survey* suggest that one in five (20.0 per cent) Victorian adults aged 18 years or over had been diagnosed with arthritis, and 4.4 per cent had been diagnosed with osteoporosis¹.
- Overall, arthritis was more prevalent among women, with 19.9% of women estimated to have some form of arthritis in 2007 compared to 17.1% of men.
- 62 per cent or 2.4 million of those with arthritis are in the working age population (15-64).
- Obesity is an important risk factor for osteoarthritis; obese people are around 2.4 times as likely to have osteoarthritis as people of normal weight, while overweight people are 35% more likely to have osteoarthritis.

Improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians

The Victorian Government is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all Victorians. Investing in approaches that promote, support and enable active living can provide an opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals while strengthening and supporting families and the community.

There are a number of ways of reducing the risk of the onset of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions:

- avoiding joint injury
- avoiding vitamin D deficiency
- adopting healthy lifestyle behaviours:
 - healthy weight - obesity is a risk factor for all chronic disease
 - healthy eating – a balanced diet rich in vitamin D and calcium
 - regular physical activity
 - avoiding tobacco use
 - avoiding high risk alcohol use and
 - falls and falls injuries prevention strategies.
- Regular, moderate exercise aids in the prevention of musculoskeletal conditions and offers a number of benefits to people with arthritis and osteoporosis. For those with the condition, exercise reduces joint pain and stiffness, builds strong muscle around the joints, and increases flexibility and endurance.
- Weight-bearing exercise assists in the maintenance of bone mass. Therefore, regular exercise such as walking, jogging, playing tennis or aerobic classes is recommended to help in the prevention of osteoporosis.

Arthritis Victoria

- Arthritis Victoria, www.arthritisvic.org.au, is the leading Victorian organisation supporting people with arthritis, osteoporosis and other musculoskeletal conditions. The aim is to improve quality of life, prevent disability, promote self-management and positive health and fitness, increase independence and support the efforts of carers.
- Over 1.5 million people in Victoria have a musculoskeletal condition. More than 820,000 have arthritis.
- For information on arthritis, osteoporosis and other musculoskeletal conditions, call the Arthritis Victoria **Telephone Information Service**, 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday. Phone **03 8531 8000** or **1800 011 041** (toll free for country callers).

¹ Victorian Population Health Survey 2006, Department of Human Services, Victoria, 2006.

Neighbourhood Renewal

- Neighbourhood Renewal is a long-term commitment by the Victorian State Government. It aims to narrow the gap between disadvantaged communities and the rest of the State. Neighbourhood Renewal brings together the resources and ideas of residents, governments, businesses and community groups. The initiative has six key objectives, which are:
 - increased pride and participation
 - improved employment, learning and local economic activity
 - enhanced housing and environment
 - reduced crime and greater safety
 - better health and wellbeing
 - increased access to services and improved government responsiveness.