

Share your plan for arthritis prevention, treatment, and care in Canada

Arthritis is one word that describes more than 100 disease types. It is the leading cause of disability in the country and affects more than 6 million Canadians. This represents 20% of the Canadian population - more than the entire populations of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. The number of people living with arthritis in Canada is expected to increase by about 3 million to a total of 9 million people by the year 2040.

Canadians of all ages, sexes and races can and do have arthritis. Although commonly perceived to be a disease affecting older adults, approximately two-thirds of Canadians living with arthritis are under the age of 65. And, to many people's surprise, one in 1,000 children in Canada has arthritis. Arthritis is the most common long-term chronic disease in Canada. Yet, no national arthritis strategy exists like it does for cancer, heart & stroke, diabetes, and mental health.

To effectively treat and manage the most prevalent and disabling types of arthritis, the next elected federal government must improve the level of arthritis prevention, treatment, and care.

Question 1

Arthritis affects one out of five Canadians, yet no model of standardized arthritis care is available.

Will your party develop and implement a new national arthritis strategy that will improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs?

Question 2

There are currently more than 4 million Canadians living with osteoarthritis (OA). The rising rates of OA will cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$17.5 billion a year in lost productivity by 2031, as the disease forces greater numbers of people to stop working or work less. While effective therapies exist, the high prevalence of other medical conditions in people with OA makes management challenging (90 per cent of people with OA have at least one additional chronic disease). There is a particularly strong association between OA and obesity.

What policies will your government introduce that address OA and obesity to help sustain the employability of people who have pain and loss of function in their hips and knees?

Question 3

An Arthritis Consumer Experts' 2021 national survey on virtual care for people living with arthritis in Canada shows arthritis patients' satisfaction with virtual care is high. Over 75% of respondents reported their preference in the future, post-pandemic, for a mix of in-person and virtual care services.

However, ACE's survey found inequities built into virtual care services use for black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC), chief among them being the uneven distribution of broadband and high-speed internet across the country, access to required electronic devices that can support a video call, lack of digital literacy and language barriers.

How will your party ensure equitable arthritis patient access to virtual care, particularly for members of the BIPOC communities?

Question 4

Racism is an important determinant of health, contributing to unacceptable health and social inequities. Indigenous peoples in Canada have some of the highest rates of life-threatening and disabling arthritis in the world and are at greater risk for becoming disabled by arthritis. Significant gaps in arthritis care in Indigenous communities currently exist.

What will your government do to address inequities and improve the healthcare of Indigenous peoples in Canada living with arthritis?

Question 5

Millions of Canadians have insufficient reimbursement coverage, or none at all for prescription medications. An Arthritis Consumer Experts' 2021 national survey on arthritis medications reimbursement for people living with arthritis reveals one in four patient households struggles financially to pay for prescribed medications.

How will your government work with provincial and territorial governments to ensure fair, equitable and optimal access to necessary medications for arthritis patients?