

## ARTHRITIS AWARENESS MONTH IN CANADA IS SEPTEMBER – RELIEVE ARTHRITIS PAIN BY SOAKING IN THE BATHTUB!

Arthritis Awareness Month provides an opportunity for Canadians to learn more about arthritis and how to manage the challenges of the disease and reduce pain.

“Arthritis is the second and third most common chronic condition reported by Canadian women and men respectively. It is estimated that more than four million Canadians aged 15 and older are affected by arthritis. With the aging population, this number is expected to increase to approximately seven million in 2031. ‘Arthritis’ can describe over 100 conditions that affect the joints, the tissues that surround joints and other connective tissue,” according to a recent Canadian health department government bulletin.

Pain and stiffness are two key hallmarks of arthritis and can make everyday activities difficult or painful to perform. It may come and go as the arthritis goes into a flare or subsides in remission, but for most people with the disease it will never entirely disappear. Managing pain and maintaining function and mobility are the most important challenges of the disease.

No one pill or management technique is enough to provide non-stop pain relief safely, so a combination strategy of arthritis medications, lifestyle changes, stress management and non-medicinal pain relief strategies provide the best overall pain management relief plan.

Non-drug strategies to deal with the pain of arthritis include physical activity (exercise), heat, massage, biofeedback, sleep, creams and gels, relaxation and acupuncture.

One common method of arthritis pain management is to soak in the bathtub. Soaking in warm water has many health benefits. The warmth and buoyancy combined with the hydrostatic pressure can be extremely beneficial to arthritis sufferers. The water relaxes and supports muscles, reducing stress on the joints. Reduced muscle tension also improves circulation to the joints and extremities, further improving healing and mobility.

Because inflammation is involved in most forms of arthritis, treating the inflammation can help with pain and mobility. Edema (fluid accumulation/swelling) can be reduced by soaking in water – the water pressure forces the water out of your joints promoting healing. With reduced swelling, pain is alleviated. Soaking in a bathtub promotes relaxation and sleep, further reducing pain.

"As a Registered Massage Therapist, I treat many people with arthritis conditions. My patients benefit from stretching and mobilizing the muscle and connective tissue to improve circulation to these areas. I regularly instruct people in homecare including bath and hydrotherapy techniques. This combination allows them to maintain function, manage their symptoms and reduce their dependency on pain drugs," says Matthew Longman, RMT with Ethel Street Therapeutic Massage Clinic and CEO of Aquassure Accessible Baths.

Aquassure Accessible Baths is a Canadian manufacturer of accessible bathtubs for people with mobility challenges. People with mobility challenges often cannot get in and out of traditional soaker bathtubs. Our bathtubs replace home bathtubs with a deep-soak spa tub that is accessible from walkers, and wheelchairs, enabling our customers to bathe safely. Many of our customers suffer from arthritis and have found relief by being able to soak in the bathtub again.

### Resources:

The Canadian Arthritis Society <http://www.arthritis.ca>

Arthritis Foundation [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)