

The Wellness Express

Jump on the train to good health

Issue 2, June 2010

Joint Supplements: The Healthy Alternative to Drugs

Presented by:

In the last issue of the Wellness Express, we looked at arthritis and how chiropractic may help some sufferers of this debilitating condition. In this issue we focus on natural substances that help reduce joint pain, especially discomfort caused by arthritis.

Natural Eggshell Membrane

There's promising joint health research on natural eggshell membrane (NEM), which consists of proteins and glycosaminoglycans – a family of carbohydrates that also includes joint supporting chondroitin sulfate.

In a 2009 study published in *Clinical Interventions in Aging*, patients suffering from joint and connective tissues (JCT) disorders received 500 milligrams daily of NEM for four weeks. The results were very encouraging.

In the study conclusion, the research authors noted “Natural eggshell membrane is a possible new effective and safe therapeutic option for the treatment of pain and inflexibility associated with joint and connective tissue (JCT) disorders. Supplementation with NEM, 500 mg taken once daily, significantly reduced pain, both rapidly (seven days) and continuously (30 days).

It also showed clinically meaningful results from a brief responder analysis, demonstrating that significant proportions of treated patients may be helped considerably from NEM supplementation.”¹

While this is only one study, the effectiveness of NEM in quickly alleviating joint pain and stiffness shows a potentially powerful natural alternative to joint medications.

Glucosamine

Glucosamine is the most widely used supplement for relieving joint pain. It also serves as a building block for the development of cartilage molecules. Glucosamine comes in several different forms, but the most commercially available type is glucosamine sulfate. It is often combined with chondroitin (*see below*).

Glucosamine is well tolerated by most people. If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, talk to your chiropractor before using glucosamine - it can sometime have a negative impact on these health conditions. Some forms of glucosamine are derived from shellfish. If you have an allergy to shellfish, avoid using glucosamine derived from this source.

Exercise of the Week

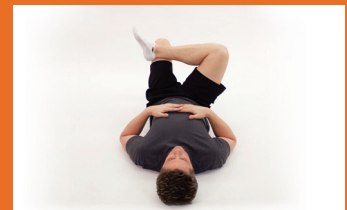
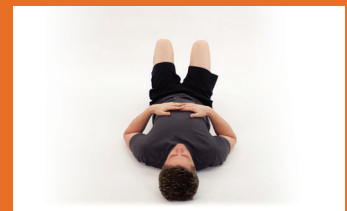
Glute Stretch (Figure 4)

Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie down on back with legs bent to 90 degrees and feet on floor.

Exercise: Place one ankle on opposite knee. Then, reach between legs and bring knee toward chest. Hold for 30-60 seconds, then return to start position. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.



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While it does not provide pain relief for everyone with joint problems, glucosamine has research supporting its therapeutic effects. In an article published in *Arthritis Research and Therapy*, researchers at the University of Queensland (Australia) found that a combination of glucosamine supplementation and walking three to five times a week improved symptoms in osteoarthritis patients.²

Chondroitin

Like glucosamine, chondroitin is an important substance for healthy joint function. As well as providing pain relief, it helps develop cartilage, assists in retaining water, and distributes cartilage nutrients. There's also evidence chondroitin may lower cholesterol and prevent hardening of the arteries. Although it's available as a single supplement, chondroitin is often combined with glucosamine to provide a more robust effect on joint pain.

In a study of patients with osteoarthritis in the knee, researchers evaluated the potency of glucosamine, chondroitin and a popular prescription pain drug. The results revealed those who had severe osteoarthritis had a significant improvement in pain symptoms when they took a combination of glucosamine and chondroitin. In fact, the combination was more effective than the prescription pain medication or taking glucosamine or chondroitin separately.³

MSM

Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) is a natural substance that also plays an important role in maintaining joint health.

Hyaluronic Acid

This natural occurring substance is found in many tissues of your body. When it comes to joints, hyaluronic acid (HA) is located in the synovial fluid, a natural lubricant that helps prevent cartilage friction when your body moves. Because blood is not found in cartilage, hyaluronic acid serves the role of transporting nutrients into the joints and taking waste out. As you age, your levels of HA decrease. This can cause problems, especially in the knee.

If you suffer from severe knee-based osteoarthritis, hyaluronic acid injections may help slash pain and inflammation. Although effective, this type of therapy is expensive and needs to be repeated every few months.

Scientists investigated whether less expensive oral supplementation of hyaluronic acid was possible. The biggest obstacle to an oral version is that HA has a large molecular size. But several years ago, Japanese scientists developed a way to lower HA's molecular weight without reducing effectiveness. This opened the door to production of hyaluronic acid in supplement form.

Again, it's important to talk to your chiropractor before using supplements, as they may affect other health conditions.

Quote of the Week

"True silence is the rest of the mind; it is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment."

- William Penn

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References and Sources:

1. Eggshell membrane: a possible new natural therapeutic for joint and connective tissue disorders. Results from two open-label human clinical studies - *Clin Interv Aging*. 2009;4:235-40. Epub 2009 Jun 9.
2. The effect of a home-based walking program and glucosamine sulphate supplementation on physical function in persons with hip or knee osteoarthritis - *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, Vol 10, Issue Suppl. 1, 2007.
3. Glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, and the two in combination for painful knee osteoarthritis - *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2006; 354:795-808.

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This newsletter is written and designed by Mediadoc™ exclusively for its chiropractic clients.

Writer/Editor: David Coyne

Writer: Dr. Christian Guenette, DC

Design: Elena Zhukova

Photos: Fred Goldstein

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