

SUPARTZ II. REVENGE OF THE ARTHRITIS!

Last week we thought we could cover the topic of Supartz or viscosupplementation (25 cent word!) in one class. Towards the end I decided to devote another class to Supartz since we had more to cover.

Someone asked, "if Supartz is so great why doesn't it always win (or at least help the arthritis)? Well, it certainly has to do with the degree of arthritis in the knee joint. The more arthritis there is, sometimes the medication can't work as well to produce good lubrication. Our experience is that it helps most patients we use it on. You have to remember that I said Orthopaedic Surgeons are in the best position to determine who it will help.

That's an important part of my job; to decide who it will help and who it has very little chance of helping. Sometimes the arthritis wins.

It works if Supartz can make the knee produce more of it's own lubrication. I have seen it last indefinitely in some of my patients, but the average would be 6 - 12 months of pain relief.

C.B. from Stanton asked if it can be used in the shoulder. It has not been officially released by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) to be injected into the shoulder.

When it is used in the shoulder or any joint other than the knee it is called "off label" use. The company can't recommend that it be used in the shoulder and if it is Medicare and some insurance carriers won't pay for it. The patient has to pay for it and most of my patients won't do that.

It does seem to work in the shoulder at least as well or possibly better than in the knee. The shoulder is a much smaller joint and not nearly as complicated as the knee. A drawback is that you have to inject the shoulder under x-ray control. The Supartz must be put into the joint directly or it can't help. It isn't possible to inject the shoulder without the aid of x-ray fluoroscopy.

How about using Supartz in the hip? Same answer in all aspects as the shoulder.

What exactly is injected when Supartz is used? 1% Sodium Hyaluronate (25mg), 2.5 ml.

Why do you use five injections? My doctor said I only need three injections with the one he uses. We have used most of them and we know from our experience that Supartz given in five injections is the most effective and longest lasting. Next question.

I'm allergic to feathers, eggs and poultry. Can I have Supartz? No, sorry.

Will Supartz be released in the near future (months) to be used in other joints? We are hearing that the answer is yes.

Could you tell me again exactly what is joint fluid? It is Hyaluronan, a thick viscous fluid (synovial fluid) which is a shock absorber and a lubricant in healthy joints. Osteoarthritis reduces your synovial fluid's ability to protect and lubricate the joint.

For more information about Supartz check out my web site www.orthopodsurgeon.com or www.supartz.com.

I guess that's enough about Joint Fluid Therapy for now. We could revisit it if there are still questions I haven't answered.

Knee problems requiring Supartz injection or any other Orthopaedic Surgery condition can be evaluated by Dr. Haverbush at Lakeview Community Wellness Center.

Future Clinic dates are Friday, May 2, May 16, May 30, 2008.

Please call 989-463-6092 to schedule an appointment.

There will be a free, very informational talk about shoulders entitled **"Shoulder Pain. It Probably isn't Arthritis"** at LCWC on May 16, 2008 at 1130 am. Please join us. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush