



Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate, A Perspective

With 30 million Americans afflicted with osteoarthritis many of our patients are trying new therapies and dietary supplements such as Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate in their search for relief.

Arthritis of course is, simply stated, the painful condition in which the cushioning cartilage or covering over the end of the bone begins to wear away.

Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate are found naturally in the body. Glucosamine stimulates the formation and repair of articular cartilage, which is the covering over the end of the bone in the joint. Supplements come from animal sources.

Chondroitin Sulfate prevents other body enzymes from degrading the building blocks of joint cartilage. Supplements of Chondroitin Sulfate come from animal sources also.

Effect in The Body

Our patients who take nutritional supplements of Glucosamine and Chondroitin do so in hopes that the supplement will relieve the pain of the osteoarthritis and perhaps even repair or restore the joint cartilage. In a significant percentage of patients, and it varies greatly from one study to another, it has been shown that the supplements do seem to relieve pain, but to what extent they may restore the damaged joint surface is less certain.

Both supplements also have some anti-inflammatory effect apparently and this may account for the pain relief aspect. The studies that have been done have been mainly to demonstrate relief of pain, but it has been somewhat difficult to document the actual rebuilding of a damaged joint surface.

A long term study sponsored by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases and the National Center for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine is just beginning.

Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration as medications. These are supplements and patients are often not getting what they are paying for. A study by ConsumerLab.com showed that half of the Glucosamine and Chondroitin supplements that are sold, which they tested, did not contain the labeled amount of ingredients.

This is why Online Orthopaedics has endorsed and I recommend to patients in my office that they take the Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate supplement Osteo-Bi-Flex. (See Osteo-Bi-Flex link).

Guidelines

I believe that my patients should speak with me before they begin taking Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate. Many patients mistakenly believe that these supplements are appropriate for all forms and all degrees of arthritis in all people. This is simply not the case. I have never dismissed a patients interest in supplements, but I need to provide them with my advice regarding their particular type of arthritis and whether I feel it would be worthwhile for them to take Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate.

Patients should continue their regular regimen of diet, exercise, medication and other therapies. Nutritional supplements should remain complimentary to other good health practices. I tell my patients they need to take the supplement for at least three months before we can decide whether it should be continued or not.



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I always tell my patients to shop around to find the best price, because I know that it does vary from one place to another. I also recommend Osteo-Bi-Flex because it is made by a reputable manufacturer and it has been shown repeatedly to contain the proper amounts of Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate that the manufacturer claims.

I recommend that my patients take Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate in the proper clinical situation, because I know that it has helped many patients. The Journal of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons in September 2001 stated "the preponderance of scientific and clinical evidence supports the inclusion of Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate in a dose of 1500mg daily as a component of a comprehensive medical management program for arthritis of the knee".



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Please consult Dr. Haverbush or a physician for specific treatment recommendations.

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