

## **The Facts About Glucosamine Sulfate**

The pain and stiffness associated with osteoarthritis is an all too common occurrence for many individuals. There are various forms of treatment available, with natural products and supplements becoming increasingly popular. One such product, glucosamine sulfate has been shown to provide marked relief from pain caused by osteoarthritis.

Glucosamine is a natural substance found abundantly in joint cartilage. It plays a major role in producing the elements that replenish and maintain cartilage. Because the joints are repeatedly subjected to damaging forces like excess weight, heavy lifting and high-impact sports, the cartilage is worn faster than the body can replace it.

Supplying the body with additional glucosamine sulfate allows it to rebuild cartilage at a faster rate, and reduce the destruction of the joint itself. Glucosamine supplementation often leads to significant pain relief and improved mobility for patients with osteoarthritis, especially when combined with proper diet, exercise, and good spinal hygiene.

The validity of natural substances is often questioned due to a lack of evidence and long-term studies. There has also been some concern that glucosamine sulfate may alter blood sugar levels. In January of 2001 a study published in the peer-review journal "Lancet" provided strong support for use of glucosamine sulfate, and put to rest any concerns about blood sugar. In the study, 212 patients with osteoarthritis received either 1500 mg of glucosamine or a placebo daily for three years. At the end of the study, the placebo group reported a 10% increase in osteoarthritis symptoms, a further loss of joint space at the knee and other x-ray features consistent with progression of osteoarthritis. The glucosamine sulfate group reported a decrease in overall symptoms and no further deterioration of their knee joints as determined by x-ray studies. The glucosamine sulfate group experienced no side effects and none of the subjects experienced any blood sugar irregularities.

As a general rule, 500 mg of glucosamine sulfate three times daily with meals is sufficient. The dose may be adjusted upward by 500 mg if you weigh greater than 200 lbs, or downward by 500 mg if you weigh less than 120 lbs. The supplement has few side effects, aside from rare reported cases of stomach upset, and no conflicts with other medications have been reported. In most individuals, glucosamine should provide partial or marked relief of arthritic aches and pains within 1-4 months. Keep in mind that only glucosamine sulfate has been shown to have proven clinical benefit, and no other form. Also, the addition of other supplements such as chondroitin sulfate have not yet been shown to add further benefit.

Glucosamine sulfate is safe, and prevents the further deterioration of joint structures. It relieves osteoarthritis symptoms and can significantly improve quality of life for individuals. For more information on glucosamine sulfate, consult your health care practitioner, pharmacist, or Dr. Godin at 435-WELL.