

# JOINT HEALTH



## Osteoarthritis - Using a Natural Approach

Arthritis refers to nearly 100 different rheumatic diseases occurring in and around the joints, and is now our nation's leading cause of disability, projected to affect nearly 60 million Americans by the year 2020. Of the two primary forms of arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis, osteoarthritis is the most prevalent form. Osteoarthritis, often called degenerative joint disease, is characterized by the degeneration of the cartilage protecting the ends of bones at the joints. Since the publishing of *The Arthritis Cure* in 1997, physicians and the public have been talking about alternative treatments for osteoarthritis. The unique structure of the articular cartilage, coupled with the chronic nature of the disease, makes this condition ideally suited for a non-pharmacologic approach. Furthermore, the biochemical pathways utilized by many of the nutrients suggested as treatment options for osteoarthritis may be halting or reversing these degenerative processes, ultimately delaying or preventing the need for surgery.

One of the interesting findings on the use of aspirin, NSAIDs, and other steroid drugs commonly used for osteoarthritis, is their effect on joint cartilage metabolism. It seems that the very drugs we use to mask the pain caused by joint cartilage loss may be preventing the joints from effectively replacing that cartilage. It would seem prudent to consider alternatives which have been shown to be equally effective to pharmacological approaches, have fewer side effects, and may actually work by helping the joint replace the cartilage and fluid it desperately needs.

Glucosamine metabolites are vital for the production of cartilage. Chondroitin sulfate, as found in **Glucosamine and Chondroitin Plus**, is the major glycosaminoglycan associate with joint cartilage. It has been shown to draw water into the joint tissues and hydrate them. This gives chondroitin the ability to be compressed when pressure is put on the joint, and then rehydrate when the pressure is released. Sulfur is very important for the integrity and function of joint cartilage. The three sulfur containing products that have been studied for usage in osteoarthritis are SAME (**SAM-e 200 mg**), DMSO, and MSM as found in **Glucosamine & MSM**. SAME has had the most published literature on its benefits in osteoarthritis. Finally hyaluronic acid (**Hyaluronic Acid**) has been shown to improve hydration and strength in the collagen, both in the skin collagen and the joint collagen.

Effective therapy for osteoarthritis often requires combination formulas which may use multiple ingredients in a single product. Inflam-Enz is a complex formulation of 13 ingredients that work synergistically to support comfort, mobility and flexibility. The once daily administration of **Inflam-Enz** can be helpful for the overall management of pain and inflammation. Another outstanding product for the treatment of joint deterioration is **Ultimate Joint Complex**. This product not only contains collagen building components, such as glucosamine and MSM, but also contains BioCell Collagen (hydrolyzed chicken collagen type II). This unique ingredient decreases the inflammatory activity in the joint and actually helps joint collagen restoration, thereby decreasing the degenerative process.



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