

## **The Research Status of Glucosamine Sulfate**

### **What is osteoarthritis? How can glucosamine sulfate help?**

Osteoarthritis is a debilitating joint disease that affects more than 40 million Americans, mainly those over 45 years old. Glucosamine sulfate (GS) is a naturally occurring substance in the body that keeps joints healthy. As we age, the production of GS decreases causing osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis symptoms include painful, swollen joints and limited movement due to the narrowing of the joint space and joint degeneration. Fortunately glucosamine sulfate supplements can be safely taken to help maintaining healthy joints.

### **Glucosamine VS. Anti-Inflammatory Drugs:**

More than 300 studies have been conducted comparing GS supplementation against non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID's). These studies have shown glucosamine sulfate (GS) supplementation produced better results than ibuprofen and other NSAID's in relieving the pain and inflammation of osteoarthritis. In addition, there were none of the common side effects of NSAIDs, such as gastritis, peptic ulcer, GI bleeding and erosion of the intestinal lining, liver & kidney toxicity and tinnitus. Glucosamine is **the only treatment approved** for osteoarthritis in more than 70 countries around the world and is currently used by millions of people.

### **How do I choose which glucosamine sulfate supplement to take?**

Glucosamine sulfate supplements afford an easy, effective way to help you take care of your joints. In many European countries GS is available only by prescription from a medical practitioner. In America we classify GS as a natural health product. As such many GS products sold in America are of a lower standard for purity and potency. Some GS supplements are packaged with chondroitin sulfate, that experts claim gives no added benefit, only added cost. In our office we use only medical grade supplements produced by Nutri-West. Know your source.

### **Other Clinical Uses of Glucosamine:**

- Enhance wound healing (e.g. post-surgical).
- TMJ with internal derangements and osteoarthritis.
- Beneficial as part of nutritional regime in management of inflammatory bowel diseases.
- Anti-aging strategy beginning at 45-50 years of age to prevent onset of osteoarthritis.

### **Side Effects:**

The reported short-term adverse side effects from the use of glucosamine are generally mild and infrequent.

- Mild gastrointestinal upset.
- Drowsiness.
- Skin reactions.
- Headache.

### **Allergic or Sensitive to Sulfa Drugs:**

Patients that are allergic or sensitive to sulfa drugs or sulfate containing food additives can safely take glucosamine sulfate. The word "sulfate" in this instance indicates the presence of the mineral sulfur, not the sulfa compounds used in sulfa drugs and sulfate containing food additives.

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### **Severe Allergy to Shellfish:**

GS is manufactured from the chitin exoskeleton of shellfish, such as lobster, crab and shrimp. Therefore it is conceivable that a person with severe shellfish allergy may be sensitive to the use of glucosamine, although the pharmaceutical grade of GS is generally devoid of shellfish contaminants.

### **Diabetic and Pre-Diabetic Patients:**

Preliminary animal research has shown that some individuals on glucosamine supplementation may increase insulin resistance. It is advisable that diabetics monitor their glucose blood levels for the first few weeks of supplementation.

### **Patients on Diuretics:**

Individuals taking diuretics may require additional GS to compensate for the increased excretion rate.

### **Exercise and Arthritis:**

Contrary to what is commonly believed, moderate exercise does not increase the risk for osteoarthritis or exacerbate it; rather, it improves joint function and reduces pain.