FAQs: Dog Hip and Joint Supplements

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Dog Arthritis Supplements: General FAQs

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How do glucosamine and chondroitin in dog joint supplements work?

Glucosamine provides the building block of cartilage. Chondroitin also is one of the products necessary for a production of cartilage. Glucosamine plus chondroitin work better together than either ingredient alone.

How long can I keep my dog on a joint supplement?

Most dogs can safely stay on a joint supplement for the rest of their lives. Once the product has provided support for 6-8 weeks, the dose can often be reduced.

Do dog joint care supplements have any side effects?>

There have been very few side effects observed in dogs taking joint supplements. Drs. Foster and Smith have sold tens of thousands of doses of glucosamine and chondroitin products and have never seen a single, severe side effect. Rarely, a dog will vomit or get diarrhea if started on high doses. If the dose is reduced or given with food, the symptoms are usually alleviated. The safety of joint supplements makes them well suited for long term use.

Can I give my dog joint supplements containing glucosamine or chondroitin along with painkillers or other drugs?

It is always best to check with your veterinarian before putting your dog on any medication or supplement. If recommended, your dog can be given both a joint supplement and an anti-inflammatory pain reliever, such as aspirin or carprofen (Rimadyl®). Many dogs taking a joint supplement no longer require a pain reliever. However, some dogs may need to be on a

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low dose of pain relieving medication to maintain their comfort even with the benefits of glucosamine and chondroitin. Other supplements such as multivitamins and fatty acids are often given to animals on glucosamine supplements without any problems.

Can glucosamine and chondroitin be used in cats?

Supplements containing glucosamine and chondroitin are often used in cats and appear to work very well in support of joint health. Drs. Foster and Smith produces several joint supplements specifically for cats and small dogs, including our favorites Joint Care Premium Plus® and Joint Care 2 with MSM.

How are dog joint products different from human joint supplements?

Pharmaceutical grade glucosamine and chondroitin are used for human joint supplements and are found in some supplements for dogs, including all of those with a Drs. Foster & Smith label. Joint supplements for dogs contain ascorbic acid to help in the uptake of the ingredients by the body. In addition, canine joint products are dosed in the correct size for dogs and are often flavored to make them more palatable to pets.

What is perna mussel?

Perna canaliculus, or green-lipped mussel, is an edible shellfish found off the shores of New Zealand. The soft tissue is separated from the shell, washed several times, frozen, and freeze-dried. It is then processed into a fine powder and added to joint supplement products. It contains glucosamine, glycosaminoglycans (which are also building blocks of cartilage), and a type of omega-3 fatty acid. Supplements for dogs that contain perna include Joint Guard® Treats and Glyco-Flex products.

What is creatine?

Creatine is modified by the body to serve as a storage reservoir for quick energy. In humans, it builds lean body mass by helping the muscle work longer, allowing one to train harder, lift more weight, and have more repetitions. It is the increase in exercise that results in building muscle, not creatine alone. When combined with exercise, it may be helpful in dogs who are losing muscle. .

What is MSM?

Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) contains sulfur in a form the body can readily use. Sulfur is necessary for the production of collagen, glucosamine, and chondroitin, which are the building blocks of cartilage. Sulfur is also necessary in the formation of glutathione, which functions as one of our body's best natural antioxidants. We recommend Joint Care Premium Plus® if you are looking for a joint supplement with MSM.

What are some of the other key ingredients I should look for in dog hip and joint supplements?

Look for other key joint support ingredients in formulas for dogs, including antioxidants, hyaluronic acid, ASUs, and Omega-3 fatty acids. Antioxidants help neutralize free radicals, the molecules that damage the body's cells, including those in joints and skin. Hyaluronic acid is a substance within joint fluid that thickens it, for good lubrication. ASUs (avocado/soybean unsuponifiables) support cartilage health. Omega-3 fatty acids support joint health and may be helpful in reducing joint inflammation.

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