



Health Awareness

Joint Health Update

(NAPSA)—It may seem surprising to some, but many of today's grandparents are more likely to be found hiking with their grandchildren than baking cookies, and many of these older Americans are turning to supplements such as glucosamine, chondroitin and MSM to make sure they can.

Advice For An Active Lifestyle

As baby boomers age, they want to stay younger longer, which includes maintaining joint health to continue an active lifestyle. Joint problems can come from a variety of sources including inflammation; microscopic bone fractures; infection; ligament, tendon or muscle disorders; or nerve damage.

One Problem

A frequent diagnosis is osteoarthritis (OA), the most common form of arthritis and the second most common cause of long-term disability among middle-aged and older adults. OA is characterized by a loss of joint cartilage, which provides cushioning between bones, and by changes in the underlying bones and surrounding tissues. Symptoms include stiffness, decreased range of motion and chronic joint pain.

The Arthritis Foundation estimates that 21 million Americans suffer from osteoarthritis, affecting more women over 50 years old than men. In a recent CDC report, 8.3 percent of the population (25 million people) reported arthritis-related limitations in their usual activities.

A Solution

Experts on joint health recommend a total joint solution including:

- low-impact exercise;
- weight loss;
- a diet rich in fruits, vegeta-



No bones about it, keeping your knees up to speed means giving them what they need. For many people, experts recommend nutritional supplements such as MSM to help maintain joint health.

bles and omega-3s;

- dietary supplements.

This integrative approach can delay or prevent surgery, considered the last resort in osteoarthritis.

Citing concerns about medication's side effects, many people have turned to dietary supplements. Because the source of joint pain varies, choosing just one nutritional ingredient may not always work. Most people take a formula with several ingredients. Glucosamine and chondroitin are the most common, but methylsulfonylmethane, or MSM, is emerging as a safe and effective natural anti-inflammatory agent and cartilage-supporting supplement.

"Nearly every leading joint health brand now contains MSM along with glucosamine and chondroitin," says Jeremy Appleton, N.D., C.N.S., a naturopathic doctor and leading expert on MSM.

MSM, a naturally occurring nutrient, is rich in sulfur, an

essential building block in maintaining cartilage and connective tissue.

Clinical Trial Results

A 2006 study in the medical journal *Osteoarthritis and Cartilage* concluded that MSM was effective in reducing pain and increasing mobility in osteoarthritis patients without adverse effects. Clinical studies suggest that the effective dosage range is between 1,500 and 6,000 mg per day. Published safety data shows no side effects even at high levels.

"The advantage of MSM is that patients can safely modulate dosage until they realize results," says Jason Theodosakis, MD, MS, MPH, FACPM, a sports medicine expert and author of the best-selling book "The Arthritis Cure."

The onset of osteoarthritis is a gradual process and many experts say that when people start early in maintaining joint health they can preserve mobility far beyond what used to be expected. Lower doses of MSM may also help normalize levels of sulfur in the body. In low-sulfur environments, anti-inflammatory drugs, commonly used in osteoarthritis, may become detrimental to cartilage cells.

Make It Mainstream

The 2006 Consumer Report Supplement Guide cautions: "Our experience suggests mainstream brands may be more reliable." The Arthritis Foundation agrees. It suggests buying products sold by large, well-established companies.

Learn More

More information can be found at MSMGuide.com, an independent Web site containing consumer and practitioner frequently asked questions and abstracts of clinical research.