



Health And Well-Being

Summertime Solutions for Osteoarthritis

(NAPSA)—Summertime and the living is easy—at least that's how the song goes. But for those with joint pain, summertime can be especially difficult because of the negative effects that heat, humidity and increased activity can have on joints already stressed or diseased from conditions like osteoarthritis.

According to the Arthritis Foundation, osteoarthritis, one of the most common joint ailments and the most prevalent form of arthritis, affects an estimated 20.7 million Americans, mostly after age 45. Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative disease in which the cartilage that covers the ends of bones in the joint deteriorates, causing pain and loss of movement as bone begins to rub against bone. The Foundation notes that 80 percent of those with OA report some form of limitation in movement or activities, which can be particularly frustrating during a season when many people are out gardening, on the golf course, walking or running in the park, playing softball or one of many favorite summer pursuits. Given the pain and physical limitations, many people with joint pain give up their favorite warm weather activities and become more and more sedentary.

Currently, there is no cure for osteoarthritis. Instead, doctors focus on alleviating joint pain with over-the-counter and prescription anti-inflammatory drugs, many of which can have negative side effects.

As an alternative, researchers have been looking at nutritional interventions with foods and supplements. During the growth period from childhood to early adulthood, vitamins and minerals—particularly vitamin C, calcium and vitamin D—promote the growth of cartilage and bone tissue and the development of healthy joints. The stronger the joint is, the theory goes, the less vulnerable it is to damage.



New treatments for osteoarthritis may help people enjoy a pain-free season.

Promising new research also indicates that collagen hydrolysate (CH), a special type of gelatine, may be able to strengthen joint cartilage and reduce joint pain. Collagen hydrolysate has the same amino acid composition as the collagen that is found in joint cartilage. Collagen provides the joint with its tensile strength and stiffness.

Two studies have suggested that consumption of 10 grams of CH each day reduces pain and improves physical function in patients with OA when taken for a minimum of 60 days. Another study demonstrated that CH not only reduced pain but also the need for pain-relievers in patients with OA. Collagen hydrolysate is currently available in several nutritional supplements.

Previously, researchers had thought that cartilage was a “dead” tissue, unable to regenerate once damaged or deteriorated. What makes CH particularly interesting is that laboratory studies have found that it can actually stimulate the production of collagen and, in turn, stimulate the regeneration of cartilage in the joint.

So summertime living can be easy, as well as pain free.