

What is Glucosamine?

Glucosamine is a combination of a naturally occurring protein and sugar. It is a substance that occurs naturally in connective tissues and cartilage of joints.

How does it work?

It has been suggested that Glucosamine helps regenerate damaged cartilage as Glucosamine is needed to make proteins which are the building blocks of cartilage. Glucosamine acts by drawing water into the cartilage producing a gel like sac providing cushioning and flexibility in the joint. By choosing to supplement your diet with Glucosamine, you are helping increase the body's natural level.

Is there any evidence?

A recent study published in 2001 showed that Glucosamine effectively controlled Osteoarthritis symptoms and suggested it produced some reversal of the disease process.

More recently, a study published in 2003 concluded supplementation improved joint mobility in 1:5 patients and may slow joint narrowing, a symptom of Osteoarthritis.

The British Journal of Sports Medicine (2003) also reported on a study which found after 12 weeks of Glucosamine, subjects with knee pain found some degree of pain relief and improved mobility.

Are there any side effects?

Minimal side effects have been noted in rare reports in complementary books and on the internet. These include:

- Skin rashes, headaches, mild stomach symptoms e.g. diarrhoea and flatulence. The long term effects are not yet known.
- Women are pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid Glucosamine, as its effects are not yet known in these groups.
- There has been concern raised whether Glucosamine increases blood sugar levels in diabetics. Although evidence is inconclusive so check with your GP if you have impaired glucose tolerance or are a diabetic.