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OSTEOARTHRITIS ARTICLES

11 Joint Supplements You Haven't Tried

Lesser-Known Natural Remedies for Osteoarthritis Pain

By Gina Roberts-Grey, Special to Lifescript
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Reviewed by Edward C. Geehr, M.D.

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"The flavonoids in propolis can be anti-inflammatory and may help with mild pain relief," says internist Jacob Teitelbaum, M.D., author of *Pain Free 1-2-3* (McGraw-Hill).

Propolis may interact with a variety of medications, including anticoagulants, antibiotics, anti-cancer drugs, anti-inflammatories, immunosuppressants and osteoporosis drugs. Severe allergic reactions are also possible, especially in people allergic to bee stings.

Recommended dosage: Propolis is available at different potencies in many forms, including tablet, capsule, ointment, powder and extract. Recommended amounts can vary, depending on any allergies or medications you're taking.

"Follow the package [recommendation] and talk to your physician for a specific dose," Dr. Teitelbaum says.

Joint Supplement #5: Green-lipped mussel extract

Extract from this New Zealand shellfish shows promise in easing osteoarthritis pain in several studies, including a 2008 research review by the University of Southampton in England.

Although scientists are still exploring why mussels might help OA, some speculate they slow cartilage damage while reducing inflammation.

However, side effects – stomach upset and skin rashes – have been reported by some people.

Recommended dosage: Follow package instructions. About 210 mg per day of an oil extract or 1,150 mg per day of freeze-dried powder may reduce joint tenderness and morning stiffness, according to one study



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Important Safety Information:

All prescription NSAIDs, like CELEBREX, Ibuprofen, naproxen, and meloxicam have the same cardiovascular warning. They may all increase the chance of heart attack or stroke that can lead to death. This chance increases if you have heart disease or risk factors for it, such as high blood pressure or when NSAIDs are taken for long periods.

CELEBREX should not be used right before or after certain heart surgeries.

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Joint Supplement #6: Devil's claw

A traditional South African plant in the sesame family, this herbal remedy relieves pain similar to NSAIDs and prescription anti-inflammatory drugs, according to Dr. Mangrum.



The active ingredients are “flavonoids and plant phenols that inhibit inflammation and pain in the joints affected by osteoarthritis,” he says. They also have antioxidant properties, he adds.

“Side effects are generally rare and can include headache or tinnitus [ringing in the ears],” Dr. Mangrum says.

Recommended dosage: Take a daily extract with 50-60 mg of the main active ingredient, harpagoside, Dr. Mangrum suggests.

Joint Supplement #7: White Willow Bark

Salicin, a chemical like aspirin, gives this remedy its anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving effects, helping ease osteoarthritis pain.

“Research has shown willow bark to be safe and effective for treating osteoarthritis of the hip and knee,” and may also help with back pain, Dr. Teitelbaum says.

Side effects tend to be mild, but stomach upset or bleeding and ulcers are possible. Taking more than the recommended dose could lead to skin rash, stomach inflammation, nausea, vomiting, kidney inflammation and tinnitus (ringing in ears).

Check with your doctor if you're taking beta blockers, diuretics or blood thinners, Dr. Mangrum says. Don't take willow bark if you're allergic to aspirin.

Recommended dosage: 60-240 mg per day, Dr. Mangrum says.

Joint Supplement #8: Ginger

This flavorful root is also a time-honored remedy for osteoarthritis pain. It inhibits the production of key inflammatory chemicals in the body, helping reduce joint pain, Dr. Teitelbaum says.



It's considered safe and isn't known to interact with any prescription medicines, he adds. Large amounts can cause heartburn or stomach upset.

Recommended dosage: Take powdered ginger capsules or drink ginger tea according to package instructions. Or else chew 2-3 cubes of candied ginger cubes or

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eat 3-6 slices of pickled ginger (like you'd find in a sushi restaurant) as joint supplements daily, Dr. Teitelbaum says.

Joint Supplement #9: Curcumin

This active ingredient in the Indian spice turmeric, a bright-yellow member of the ginger family, is a powerful anti-inflammatory and pain reliever, Dr. Teitelbaum says.

Several animal studies have suggested it may help prevent damage to cartilage, he adds.

There's a chance of mild side effects like nausea and diarrhea – but that's very rare, Dr. Teitelbaum says.

Recommended dosage: Look for turmeric capsules with standardized curcumin content, and take it according to package instructions – usually 400-600 mg up to three times per day. Or add 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric to a serving of food.