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# Is Glucosamine Good for Joint Pain?



Medically Reviewed by [Carol DerSarkissian, MD](#) on September 05, 2024 | Written by [R. Morgan Griffin](#)

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2 min read

If you're looking for a supplement that may ease your [joint pain](#), glucosamine might be worth a try. Some studies show it gives relief for mild to moderate knee osteoarthritis, and it may work for other joints, too.

## What Is It?

Glucosamine is a natural chemical compound in your body. But it also comes in the form of a supplement. There are two main types: hydrochloride and sulfate.

## What Does It Do?

The glucosamine in your body helps keep up the health of your cartilage -- the rubbery tissue that cushions bones at your joints. But as you get older, your levels of this compound begin to drop, which leads to the gradual breakdown of the joint.

There's some evidence that glucosamine sulfate supplements help counteract this effect, although experts aren't sure how.

Some people have also used glucosamine to try to treat [rheumatoid arthritis](#) and other conditions, such as [inflammatory bowel disease](#), [asthma](#), [allergies](#), chronic venous insufficiency, [sports injuries](#), temporomandibular joint problems ([TMJ](#)), and long-term low back pain. So far, though, there's not much scientific evidence that it works for those problems.

## How much glucosamine should you take?

In most studies on treating osteoarthritis, the typical dose was 500 milligrams of glucosamine sulfate, three times a day. Ask your doctor what they recommend for you. Some experts suggest you take it with meals to prevent an upset stomach.

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## Can you get glucosamine naturally from foods?

Although glucosamine sulfate supplements are often manufactured from the shells of shellfish, there aren't any natural food sources of glucosamine.

## What are the risks of taking glucosamine?

On the whole, glucosamine seems to be a fairly safe supplement. Side effects are generally mild. You're more likely to get them if you take high doses. They may include things like:

- Upset stomach
- [Heartburn](#)
- Drowsiness
- [Headache](#)

**Risks.** If you have a shellfish allergy, be cautious about using glucosamine because you could have a reaction. Also, check with your doctor before taking supplements if you have [diabetes](#), [kidney disease](#), [heart disease](#), bleeding disorders, or [high blood pressure](#).

**Interactions.** Check with your doctor before you use glucosamine if you take

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other medicines, including heart drugs, [blood thinners](#), and diabetes drugs. Also, glucosamine isn't recommended for children or women who are [pregnant](#) or [breastfeeding](#), because there isn't enough evidence yet about whether it's safe for those groups.

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