

Joint Supplements

– Does my dog need one?

The answer to this may be simple if for example you have an elderly dog with arthritis, then yes a joint supplement will definitely be of benefit. What about the rest of us with healthy fit animals? The answer is in most cases feeding a joint supplement is probably not necessary, but there are situations where feeding a joint supplement can be considered a wise investment. Working dogs who are more active and put their joints under more strain than normal would be an example where feeding a joint supplement may be of benefit.

Healthy synovial joints allow two bone ends to slide smoothly over each other, courtesy of a concussion absorbing and slippery articular cartilage surface plus a supporting structure.

This structure includes a fibrous joint capsule lined by the synovial membrane and filled with a lubricating and shockabsorbing fluid known as synovial fluid.

Ligaments are another important element of the supporting structure, linking bone to bone in a way that, when the limbs move in perfect alignment, minimises the possibility of wear and tear on inappropriate, and insufficiently protected, areas of cartilage.

Outside the joint capsule, ligaments and tendons, the latter linking muscle to bone, also help to support joint structures.

How are joints damaged?

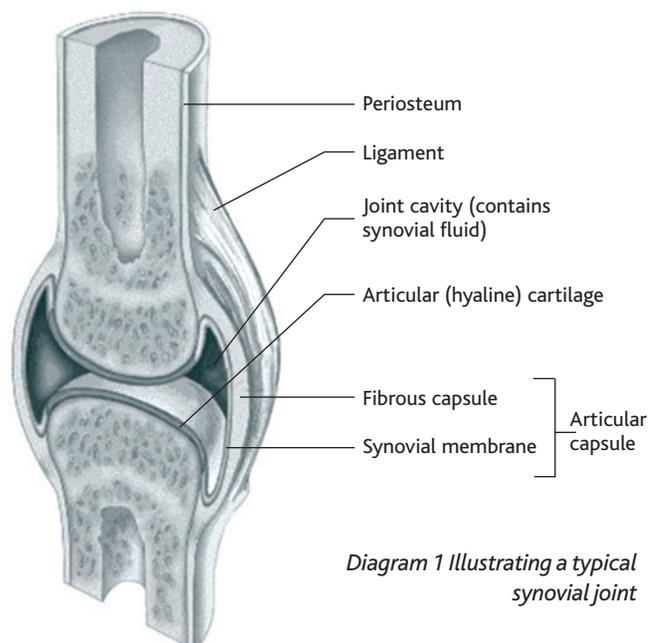
When a joint is subject to trauma from repeated and/or excessive use, a range of resulting conditions are defined under the umbrella term of 'traumatic arthritis'. An initial synovitis (inflammation of the synovial membrane) can lead to damaging changes in the cartilage itself. Pain, swelling and reduced mobility are common symptoms.

The term DJD (degenerative joint disease) is used to describe ongoing deterioration or the end result of initial trauma.

Damaged cartilage is less efficient at producing the substances that help to maintain joint elasticity and shock absorption properties.

Many factors are involved, correct nutrition and sufficient but not excessive exercise is important.

Synovial fluid acts as a shock absorber in the joints. This fluid gets thinner as the dog gets older. Glucosamine supplementation helps thicken joint fluid – thus improving the comfort zone in and around the joint.



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Supplementation

Glucosamine is a component of Glycosaminoglycans (GAG's), which are essential constituents of cartilage and synovial fluid. Hyaluronic acid (HA) is a well known GAG that plays an important role in maintaining the viscosity of joint fluid. This thick fluid acts as a lubricant for joint surfaces and together with cartilage provides most of the shock absorption to minimise the concussive forces travelling up the limbs. Glucosamine is also an important precursor of Chondroitin, a constituent of cartilage. Ample glucosamine is produced in healthy joints but damaged joints produce less.

MSM is a bio-available source of sulphur and helps maintain optimum function in connective tissues such as tendons, ligaments and muscles. It promotes fluid dispersion at injury sites via its role in the permeability of cell walls. Sulphur is needed for the production of collagen, which is an important component of cartilage. It is common for insufficient healthy cartilage to be made when joint function is compromised.

Vitamin E and C combat excess free radicals around the joint and boost the immune system.

Conclusion

Joint supplements may play an important role in improving performance in working and agility dogs. They may also improve the quality of life of our elderly companions.



Owners and breeders of valuable show dogs and working dogs often feed joint supplements to provide maximum nutritional support especially during growth.

VetSpec Joint Mobility



Per day will provide a 30kg dog e.g. a Retriever:

- 750mg of Glucosamine
- 375mg MSM
- 94mg Chondroitin
- Anti-oxidants

VetSpec Active



Per day will provide a 30kg dog e.g. a Retriever:

- 375mg of Glucosamine
- 187mg MSM
- 47mg Chondroitin
- Anti-oxidants

VetSpec Senior



Per day will provide a 30kg dog e.g. a Retriever:

- 750mg of Glucosamine
- 375mg MSM
- 94mg Chondroitin
- Anti-oxidants

Available in a 500g tub, 12 weeks supply for a 20kg dog or 200g tub, 4 weeks supply for a 20kg dog



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