



Joint Supplements:

Let's talk about joint supplements! There are SO MANY options out there and it can be overwhelming. We are here to talk about what to look for to indicate a good joint supplement. But first let's talk about when a joint supplement might be recommended for your pet. Below is a list of the more common reasons joint supplements are recommended. It should be noted both dogs and cats can benefit from joint supplements.

- Your pet has been diagnosed with joint trauma or had a previous joint surgery. This can be a cranial cruciate ligament injury (commonly called an ACL in humans) in the knee, a fracture or break in the bone that involved the joint or dislocation of a joint.
- Your pet has been diagnosed with a congenital or genetic joint abnormality such as medial patella luxation or hip or elbow dysplasia. (See our other articles on medial patella luxation and hip dysplasia).
- Your pet is a breed predisposed to developing joint disease such as many large breed dogs, particularly Labrador Retrievers and German Shepherds, are prone to hip disease.
- Your pet has been recommended to start joint supplements proactively simply as an age related recommendation. Prophylactic joint supplements can be started at any time, however, it is recommended to start by 5-7 years of age regardless for dogs and 7-9 years of age for cats.
- Your pet is overweight. Being overweight or obese places additional stress on the joints and will result in earlier development of arthritis.
- Your pet is diagnosed with arthritis by your veterinarian. This is a diagnosis that can be made either on a physical exam or with x-rays.
- Your pet has suffered a back injury or intervertebral disc disease.

So what makes a good joint supplement? There are several beneficial ingredients backed by many published studies.

- Glucosamine
- Avocado/Soybean Unsataponifiable (ASU)
- Omega 3's
- Green lipped Mussels
- Chondroitin
- Eggshell Membrane (ESM)
- Cercumin
- UC-II
- Hyaluronic acid
- Deer velvet
- MSM

For omega 3's it should be noted that when giving for different body systems the dose can be different. The dose for skin health is 1/50th the dose used for joint support. So if you think your skin supplement also will work for joints that may not be the case. For glucosamine you may see various food companies market that their foods contain glucosamine for healthy joints. A study was done that looked at the amounts of glucosamine in these diets and if it was of a high enough concentration to be beneficial. It was not! Most of these diets to reach steady state



effective levels they would have to eat 8 times the normal listed feeding amount for their size! If you are wanting an effective joint diet Hill's j/d is formulated to have appropriate therapeutic levels of glucosamine along with other benefits.

The most important thing when purchasing joint supplements is to purchase products from a reputable company. Your veterinarian is a trusted source for carrying effective and appropriate joint supplements for your pets. If you wish to source your joint supplements on your own it should be known that the labeling laws are full of holes. There have been instances in which products have claimed to contain, for example glucosamine, on their front label but if you turn the packaging around to read the list of active ingredients it is not even listed. In some cases you may find it is listed but the amount or ratio of the ingredients may not be appropriate or effective. There are many good brands out there and we are here to help you with any questions you may have in selecting the best joint supplement for your pet! Here's a short list of commonly recommended products: Cosequin, Dasuquin, Dasuquin Advanced, Dasuquin Advanced with MSM, Movoflex, Phycos, Glycoflex, Flexadin or Adequan.