

Nonprescription Interventions for Aches and Pain

1) Dietary supplements (I suggest lifetime use)

- a) Dietary supplements are not well regulated. We cannot assure supplements contain what they say they contain, or do not contain harmful substances.
 - i) *Chondroitin sulfate* (1,200 mg. a day) and *glucosamine* (1,500 mg. a day) are helpful in relieving pain. They are generally safe, and can be bought at grocery stores, pharmacies, and health food stores. (The best price I could find is \$22 for a two-month supply at Maximum Sports Nutrition 329-1095)
- b) Two published articles suggest *glucosamine sulfate* may slow down the rate of osteoarthritis.
- c) *Chondroitin and glucosamine* have a mild pain relieving and anti-inflammatory effect. They take a while to act. Do not stop unless you have taken them for two months. They are safe to take with any medicine.

2) Over the counter medicines (use for episodes of pain)

- a) *Acetaminophen (Tylenol)* is as good as *Ibuprofen* in relieving arthritis pain. The maximum safe daily dose is 4,000 mg. a day.
 - i) You can buy 250 tablets of 500 mg. *Acetaminophen* for \$12. I suggest two 500mg tablets, four times a day.
 - ii) You can take this with *glucosamine and chondroitin*.
 - iii) Too much *Acetaminophen* can adversely affect your liver or kidneys.
 - iv) Don't take it *Acetaminophen* if you have liver or kidney disease.
 - v) Don't have over an ounce of alcohol a day.
- b) **NSAIDs (Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs)**
 - i) These are commonly used medicines for arthritis.
 - ii) They are more dangerous the longer you use them.
 - (1) NSAIDs account for 20,000 deaths a year from gastro-intestinal bleeding.
 - (2) "Manufacturers of *non-prescription (over-the-counter) NSAIDs* are also being asked to revise their labeling to provide more specific information about the potential CV and GI risks of their individual products and remind patients that these products of the limited dose and duration of treatment in accordance with the package instructions." (11APR05)

- iii) *Ibuprofen*, also known as *Motrin*, *Nuprin* or *Advil* comes over the counter in 200mg tablets.
 - (1) In general, it is safe to take up to 2400mg a day (twelve 200mg tablets) for up to 2 weeks.
 - (2) Its duration of action is 4-6 hours
- iv) *Naproxen sodium*, also known as *Aleve* comes in 250mg tablets.
 - (1) It is generally safe to take 500-750 mg a day. (2-3 tablets for up to 2 weeks.
 - (2) The duration of action is 8-12 hours.
 - (3) It is especially good if you have morning aches and pains.

3) Interactions

- a. You may take *glucosamine* and *chondroitin* with *acetaminophen* or *NSAIDs*.
- b. Although there are some theoretical problems, it is generally safe to take *acetaminophen* and *NSAIDs* together.
- c. **Don't** take two different *NSAIDs*. That means you should not take *Ibuprofen* (*Motrin*, *Nuprin*, *Advil*, etc.) and *Naproxen* (*Aleve*). Prescription forms of *NSAIDs* include *Relafen*, *Naprosyn*, *Orudis*, *Voltaren*, *Feldene*, etc.
- d. **Don't** take *NSAIDs* with *COX-2 inhibitors*, such as *Celebrex*..
- e. You should not take *NSAIDs* with *aspirin*. (However, if you take *low-dose aspirin* to prevent heart attack or stroke, your Doctor may allow you to take *NSAIDs*.)
- f. *Low dose aspirin* undoes the protective effect of *COX-2 inhibitors* on the gastrointestinal system.)

- 4) **Magnetic (standard neodymium 170-200 mTesla) bracelets** have been shown to reduce arthritis pain by 20% in one study.¹ You can order from Magnetic Therapy Ltd. ~\$30-40

http://www.magnetictherapy.co.uk/mcp/MAGNETIC_BRACELETS.html

¹ **Randomised controlled trial of magnetic bracelets for relieving pain in osteoarthritis of the hip and knee**

Tim Harlow, Colin Greaves, Adrian White, Liz Brown, Anna Hart, Edzard Ernst
BMJ 2004;329:1450-1454, doi:10.1136/bmj.329.7480.1450