

# Do you do glucosamine and chondroitin for your joints?



Know Your Joints  
Muscle and Joint Care  
Suggestions

I get asked this a lot because they are highly touted to relieve joint pain and prevent joint disease. I always say to ask your doctor, then I say I do not take them myself, because there have been mixed research results where mostly have been negative. According to Harvard Health some small studies, most looking at osteoarthritis of the knee, found that people felt modestly better taking glucosamine and/or chondroitin, but at least as many have found no benefit (see research below). So if you have money to burn you can give it a try but remember it carries risks like most supplements. It is also expensive. Harvard Health points out that while the evidence of benefit is certainly not compelling, some studies have found that these supplements provide modest benefit, and people who feel it is helping them may not care so much about individual studies anyway. They go on to say even if a treatment is not effective on average, there may be folks who, for whatever reason, get real relief from it.

Worldwide, annual spending on these supplements is predicted to reach \$3.5 billion by 2025

Potential risks.

- heartburn or abdominal pain
- diarrhea
- drowsiness
- headaches
- [allergic reactions](#) (especially if you have an allergy to shellfish).
- [drug interactions](#)

The FDA does not regulate supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin, so they may not contain the amounts stated on the label, or there could be contaminants in them.

## Cited Studies example:

- A 2018 [review of previous research](#) found that treating knee or hip osteoarthritis with glucosamine and chondroitin led to small improvements on a pain scale, but it wasn't clear that the pain relief was actually meaningful.
- A 2022 [analysis of eight studies](#) that included nearly 4,000 people with knee osteoarthritis found no convincing evidence that glucosamine and chondroitin provided major benefit.
- The case for these supplements protecting joint health or [preventing arthritis from worsening](#) is similarly weak.
- A [2016 study](#) of glucosamine and chondroitin enrolled 164 patients with knee pain due to [osteoarthritis](#) and gave half of them a combination of glucosamine and chondroitin; the other half received an identical placebo pill. The study was stopped early for an unusual reason: those taking the supplement actually reported worse symptoms than those taking a placebo. This raises the possibility that taking glucosamine and chondroitin might make your joints feel worse than doing nothing.